

FALSE SHAME:

A COMEDY,

IN FOUR ACTS,

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

KOTZEBUE. *R*

LONDON,

PRINTED FOR VERNOR AND HOOD, 31 POULTRY.

1799.

(Price Two Shillings.)

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A COMEDY

IN FOUR ACTS



TRANSLATED BY HENRY WATTS

ROBERTS



PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR BY J. JOHNSON

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

FLAXLAND, *a Counsellor of State.*

MRS. FLAXLAND, *his second Wife.*

MINNA, *his Daughter by the first Wife.*

EMMA, *an Orphan.*

CAPTAIN ERLACH.

HUGEL, *a Country Gentleman.*

VICOMTE DE MAILLAC, *an Emigrant.*

FRELON, *his Valet.*

MADAME MOREAU.

JOHN, *the COUNSELLOR'S old Gardener.*

[*The Scene is unchanged, in the Counsellor's Garden—On one side of the Stage runs a Palisadoe fencing a Lawn—on the other side stand two lofty Trees, with the branches intertwined, shading a bank of turf.*]

DRAMATIC PERSONS.

ALEXANDER, a Country Gentleman.
MRS. ALEXANDER, his second Wife.
MIRIAM, his daughter by his first Wife.
EMMA, an Orphan.
CAPTAIN BARNES.
HUBBARD, a Country Gentleman.
VICTORINA, a French Girl, in the French Service.
LEONOR, his Sister.
MADAME MOREAU.
JOHN, the Cooksman's old Gardener.

[The Scene is changed, in the Countess's Garden—On one side of the stage there is a Palace, and on the other side stands a lofty Tree, with the branches intertwined, forming a sort of roof.]

FALSE SHAME.

ACT I.

SCENE I. JOHN, upon a short ladder, clipping the hedge, humming a ditty, and talking at intervals.

JOHN.

LUXURIANT shoots :—here and every where : but they cannot every where be prun'd :—Ho ! ho ! could I but for once, with my sheers, go to work pell-mell among the rabble who are feasting here upon the fat of the land snap ! snap !—every cut should tell. (*he sings, then pauses*)—My poor master ! Happiness was once in this garden a perennial ever-green—flourishing without labour in each nook : now, have they hemin'd my good master within so close and thick a fence—that not a sun-beam can penetrate a *cheval de frize* : and the effect upon him is but too apparent, for he wastes away like a “ *viola matronalis* ” devoured by insects. (*he sings and works*)

SCENE II. EMMA crosses the Stage slowly, knitting, and as she passes says—Good morrow JOHN.

John. Good morrow, my heart's dear young lady,—what ? so early risen ;—a thick dew is on the ground, and you will wet your feet.

Emma. The sun shone through my window, that attracted me hither.

[Exit.

John. (*looking after her*) a pretty flow'et ! that hides itself in the grass like a ripe strawberry—Heaven
B preserve

preserve her from the ravenous jack-daws. Our Minna, —is also good: ay, very good;—but she fashions herself rather too much after her step-mother; and it may soon be said,—she *was* good. (*he sings and works*)

SCENE III. Enter FRELON.

Frelon. Bon jour, maitre Jean.

John. (*Pauses,--eyes him:--smiles contemptuously, and works on*).

Frelon. (*Approaches and cries*) What, ho!

John. What's the matter?

Frelon. I say bon jour, maitre Jean!

John. And I say—go to the Devil; I am an honest old fellow, and must be spoken to in my mother tongue; do'st understand, Mounseer bon jour?

Frelon. Master John is forever grumbling.

John. The Cuckoo is *Maitre Jean*—my name is John: keep your distance, with your French flim-flams.

Frelon. The asses cry—Jahn, Jahn!--

John. So I hear!

Frelon. *Maitre Jean*, sounds better.

John. All passes current with you, if it doth but sound:—go your ways, *Mounseer* cling-clang, and leave me unshorn.

Frelon. Sheep are shorn; but not bears.

John. Take heed of the bear's paws—(*he sings and works*)

Frelon. *Maitre Jean*, avec permission, leave off singing—you have a cracked voice.

John. Who hinders thee from taking thyself off?

Frelon. My master ordered me to wait for him here.

John. Then post thyself yonder among the young peas—that for once in thy life, thou may'st be good for something.

Frelon. Your jests are truly German.

John. Methinks, for German bread—thou may'st well digest German truisms.

Frelon. (*fanning himself*) It will be hot to day.

John. There is mud in the pond, where thou may'st cool thyself.

Frelon. Apropos—The pond must be filled up.

John.

John. (*Surpris'd*) What?

Frelon. I say the pond must vanish.

John. (*Smiles sneeringly,--sings and works*).

Frelon. Only let my master strike up a match with the daughter of the house, and we shall soon turn things topsy turvy.

John. Your master--with Miss Minna?

Frelon. Yes, yes, the viscount is in a fair way to forget what he owes to his illustrious ancestors.

John. So—but Miss Minna will scarcely forget what she owes to herself.

Frelon. *Mon ami*, my master is accustomed to turn the heads of young girls.

John. Verily, they must be turned to endure him.

Frelon. Respect--*Maitre Jean*—a word from me, and you fall under my master's displeasure.

John. Hey!--

Frelon. At any rate—I have my doubts, whether my master will continue your service.

John. So!--

Frelon. As to the kitchen garden, you may there perhaps understand your business:—but, *mon ami*, you want taste.

John. Indeed!

Frelon. Your trees, hedges and tulips,—might pass in Holland—but suit not our taste; we require striking prospects—improvisos—hermitages—mausoleums.

John. Now, have I enough of it?

Frelon. You are old, *mon ami*: have seen very little of the beautiful; *il faut lui passer son ignorance*; you may be welcome to continue here as under-gardener; but we shall engage a Frenchman--a *sans pareil*, ah! *maitre Jean*—you may then become a pupil.

John. I! become a pupil!—(*descending from the steps*)

Frelon. What is now undermost—he will make uppermost;—he will improve the muddy pool into Dian's bath—and the down-falling forcing-house—into a Chinese Kiosk.

John. Kiosk! Thou contemptible gasconader (*he seizes a water engine, and waters Frelon's legs*)

Frelon. (*Jumping about*) *maitre Jean*, *Maitre Jean*—what means all this?--

John. Diana's bath—*Mounseer, bonjour!*

Frelon. I say, let me alone.

John. If it does not please thee—why,—crawl into the Kiosk--(he follows Frelon about the stage).

SCENE IV. *The Privy Counsellor FLAXLAND, and the former.*

Flax. John—what art thou doing?

John. I am rooting up weeds!

Flax. Dost not know, in whose service the fellow is?

John. (half aside) O! yes! like master, like man.

Frelon. (Wiping his legs with his handkerchief) *Maitre Jean* loves fun.

Flax. Where is your master?

Frelon. Most likely—yet at the ball.

Flax. (Forcing a smile) Bravo!—That I call dancing.

Frelon. Towards day-break, he sent me away, and ordered me to wait for him here.

Flax. (with constrain'd indifference) the Viscount will doubtless attend my wife home.

Frelon. My master knows good breeding.

Flax. Was the ball well kept up?

Frelon. O! yes! your lady dances—*comme un ange*, & *Mademoiselle Wilhelmine*--*comme un zephyr*.

Flax. Was the company numerous?

Frelon. Your lady, was seated at midnight in a circle of the *beau monde*.

Flax. (suppressing his uneasiness) I hope she will not take cold, in returning home?

Frelon. She sent back the phaeton—Chevalier Hugel offered his carriage.

Flax. Hugel! is he in town?—I am glad of it.

Frelon. He arrived last night in full gallop—dismounted—and flew to the ball—*ventre saint gris*—*maitre Jean* has so drench'd me, that, by your leave, I must change my *chaussure*. [Exit.

SCENE V. *Counsellor FLAXLAND and JOHN.*

Flax. Prithce tell me, John, why the trees, near the water, are festooned together?

John.

John. It is my lady's order—I was to strip the garden of laylock and gilder roses.

Flax. But wherefore all this preparation?

John. How should I know?—she is to give a something—the puppy just hopp'd off---named it in French—Mounseer Rosat, the friseur, described it to me---it is called---ha! ha! ha!----a dancing breakfast; the cooks have been at work all night--and the maids beating chocolate.

Flax. (*with constrain'd indifference*) So!—

John. Ay, ay, for a couple of years there has been such a bustle in the garden, that the nightingales have quite deserted it.

Flax. No matter, good old man, if contentment here still builds her nest.

John. Ay, ay, contentment is a pretty bird, but, at times, flies away like the swallows.

Flax. (*Sighs and endeavours to conceal it.*)

John. Be not offended, my dear master, I am an old grey headed servant, who look'd anxiously on, when you were baptized—you grew up, but always lov'd to be alone;—when the neighbours' children played, you sometimes, thro' good nature, mingled in their sports—but then you look'd just as you do now—tho' never austere—you understand me?

Flax. (*smiling*) If neighbours' children had claims on my good nature—how much more my dear wife!—

John. But often, what is easy to the lad, goes against the grain for the man—the twig bends—the tree breaks---After peaceably and quietly jogging on in the same path for the fourth of a century, at the end of the way, we are not inclined to practice any side steps.

Flax. My wife is young; I am turn'd of forty, and therefore thou'd be doubly obliging; (*with warmth*) and she is moreover entitled to my fullest confidence---she is, indeed, an incomparable woman.

John. Mighty well---if madam would but leave me the garden in peace.

Flax. How so—old one?—what difficulties have you to encounter?

John. Ah! my dear master---the garden is my paradise—my father—God bless him—plann'd the garden—there

---there was I born and bred---and a couple of years excepted---which, thro' love of the art, I pass'd in Holland---I have scarce moved a step from the gate---my hand prunes each fruit-tree---and what my arms can now scarcely span---I remember a tender sapling ---Behind yon meadow is a grass plat---it is hardly noticed---by the garden wall stand a few birch trees---where in the evening I smoke my pipe.

Flax. Well!

John. Methought---that a good word to your honor in my behalf---would get your leave to have me buried there.

Flax. That shall be done, my honest fellow.

John. Ah! but who knows how long these birch-trees may remain---Madam has it under consideration to pull down the wall, and to make a plantation in the meadow, with a labyrinth intermixed with a bit of a corn-field---a Parnassus---and I know not what---and my poor birch-trees will stand in the way.

Flax. No one shall molest thy birch-trees.

John. But who will care about such poor wood, when even these beautiful linden trees are not spared.

Flax. What linden trees?

John. (*pointing to the two trees twined together*) Do you no longer know your nurselings?---you and Miss Philippina planted them, on your good mother's birthday.

Flax. O! I full well remember it.

John. You were then both children, scarcely taller than this rose-bush---and when you had put the cuttings in the ground---you joined your hands over them, and kiss'd one another---your lady mother wept, and said to me, John, have a care of these suckers---this I have faithfully done---they are become a pair of stately trees; and must I now sell them?---no, I cannot do it---the hand wou'd grow nerveless that attempted to lay an axe to these roots.

Flax. But who wishes thee to cut 'em down?

John. Madam says---when one sits in the summer house, these linden trees shut out the prospect of the village.

Flax. No matter, these lindens shall not be touch'd---I specially entrust them to thee, John.

John.

John. Mighty well.

Flax. It is the sole remembrance of my poor sister.

John. Alas! Yes!

Flax. My dear woman knew not of this.

John. Likely not: it was but yesterday she first mentioned it. I believe the flighty *Mounseer* puts these fancies in her head—He was with her,—skipping and *pirouetting*--treading down here a cucumber, and there the ripe strawberries. He seems to stand high in *Madam's* good graces.

Flax. (*with keen sensibility*) Do'st think so?

John. He never leaves her side.

Flax. He is thought to be an agreeable companion.

John. To be sure, he can prattle--and so can his *valet de chambre*,--he already boasts of alliances.

Flax. (*eager*) What alliances?

John. I dare not even repeat them, for I do not believe a syllable of the *gasconnade*.

Flax. (*aside*) So; already the servants prattle, (*going to speak, but restrains himself*) Enough *John*: I disturb thee in thy work--I could not sleep: and thought to be the first in the garden.

John. The first! O! no: *Miss Emma* was here half an hour ago.

Flax. Emma! where is she?

John. Yonder she sits knitting--yonder, among the rose bushes.

Flax. (*calling to her*) Good-morrow, Emma,

SCENE VI. EMMA, and the former.

JOHN removes further down, clipping his hedge, and gradually disappears in the back ground.

Emma. Good-morrow, my dear father, I did not know you were so early risen.

Flax. Thy case was mine, and thy tiptoe tread was needless;--what wilt thou give me to be the messenger of good tidings?

Emma. Give! you joke! To give you, would be only to give back--for have I not received all from you?

Flax. From me!--nothing my child;--thou owest me only the roof, beneath which thou dwellest; every thing else, to the last penny, is repaid me, by my astonishing friend, from his small stipend.

Emma. But can he also repay your fatherly affection?

Flax. That, thou amply refundest--familiarizing to me the delightful idea of having two daughters--indeed, I could almost become jealous, by reflecting, that I must to day divide my strongest claims upon your heart.

Emma. To day!

Flax. Erlach is expected.

Emma. Expected! and to-day!--my deliverer!--my noble benefactor!--at length, after eight years; but, my dear father, will he certainly come?

Flax. He writes so--as usual, in three laconic lines--the intelligence surprized me; for at the beginning of a campaign, Erlach is not accustomed to make visits.

Emma. Scarcely can I recal his figure--O! would he were here! I will meet him--which road must he take?

Flax. No one knows--my worthy Erlach seldom adds place or date to his letters;--do but read; "thou wilt receive enclosed, Emma's pension--and next Tuesday, myself"---that is all.

Emma. Sure enough! only a word or two--but stamp'd with kindness--his time is too precious for writing--'tis devoted to action:--is it not so dear father? the hour is lost to him that doth not dedicate some good deed to eternity.

Flax. The gentle Emma has caught enthusiasm, and it pleases me.

Emma. O! when he raised the wretched Emma from the mass of ruins--when he shared with her his trifle of pay--whenever I think of it, I cannot but weep. My whole heart is his.

Flax. And deservedly; may'st thou succeed, dear girl, in curing him of his woman hatred! and, indeed, the more I contemplate thee--the more rational and the more probable, do I consider this hope--what thinkest thou Emma?--thou knowest the disposition of the man--his form alone is forgotten--but that is noble.

Emma. And were he as ugly as the slumbering poet--whom a queen kiss'd in passing--he only uttered the beautiful---Erlach does it.

Flax.

Flax. Thy gratitude takes such a lofty flight, that her wings seem soaring to the regions of love.

Emma. What is love--if not attracted by the good and beautiful?

Flax. Thou art not then disinclined? thou permittest me to indulge an association of ideas.

Emma. You joke, my dear father, and amuse yourself with my reveries--but do you know, that your playfulness may cherish a romantic day-dream, that has long been sporting in my brain?

Flax. Well, my dear little American, let's hear?

Emma. When, on a summer's eve, I steal from your gay circle to wander in the avenue of elms, then build I castles in the air--how to recompence my benefactor--to enliven his old days--but I am playing the fool with my talkativeness--and fortunately I just now perceive our ball visitors returning home: dearest father, you have discovered my soul unveil'd--but yonder *gala beaux*, shall not surprize me in *deshabille*.

[*She runs off.*]

Flax. And do they come at last?--but not to me! a *dejeuné dansant* engages them homeward.

SCENE VII. MINNA, HUGEL, FLAXLAND.

Minna. Good-morrow, to thee, my sweet papa, or should I not rather say, good-night, and pillow my cheek to sleep?

Flax. Art thou fatigued?

Minna. O! dying!

Flax. Dear Hugel, I so much the more rejoice to see my good neighbour--as, at this season, I dared not expect the pleasure.

Hugel. You are right, Sir--the country in spring, furnishes so much occupation--so much gratification--

Minna. And what a grateful, a respectful curtsy, must I make you: that you left all to a chance medley--to be my partner.

Hugel. Could my company be of the least possible value, I might flatter myself to have deserved it.

Minna. Extreme diffidence borders on vanity--who could have thought, dear papa, that this young Squire--who hitherto lurked in a corner, and looked on, when other folks were capering last night, at my high behest

at

at length boldly resolved to stand with me the *last* couple in a *contre* dance, upon the express condition, only to hand up--and then to retire, if the figure seemed too intricate. I consequently expected nothing less--than an awkward simpleton, weighing like lead upon my arm, and bungling through right and left--when, lo! he footed it along with me like a pupil of Vestris. In the name of wonder--why have you hitherto seemed as if you were lame?

Hugel. I never danced in a public ball room; the townsmen enjoy a laugh against us rustics.

Flax. False shame was the only failing I could ever discover in my young friend.

Minna. I have not yet finished papa--he sat next me at supper--I filled him bumpers, and was very attentive to him--whether inspired by wine, or my smiles--the dumb Squire Hugel became eloquent--conversed so sensibly--and sported such engaging *bon mots*, that I almost forgot I was in the temple of folly. But in heaven's name thou wonderful man! why, hitherto, hath thou been so sparing of words?

Hugel. Because I am too apt to utter some absurdities in large circles.

Minna. For this very reason--we have large circles, that every one may play the fool with impunity--what in a select company, is becoming diffidence--would in the world be called false shame; there, your apparel must be splendid, and your discourse dazzling: by our fire side, we require comfort from cloathing--and good sense from conversation.

Flax. (*Who for some moments seemed restless and uneasy*) Where did'st thou leave thy mother?

Minna. She supposed you was still in bed--and hastened to your chamber, to awaken you with a kiss.

Flax. Was she alone?

Minna. Alone! O! dear! as if one could shake off the Viscount de Maillac--without telling him, to go to the devil.

Flax. He was then with her?

Minna. Not precisely with her--but behind her--when they perceive papa is not above, they will of course come into the garden.

Flax.

Flax. Quite right ; for, lo ! yonder they are. (*his countenance brightens, and he hastens to meet his wife*)

SCENE VIII. MRS. FLAXLAND, VISCOUNT DE MAILLAC, and the former.

Maillac. *Nous voila, Monsieur le Conseillere.*

Flax. Good-morrow, my love--hast thou been well amused ?

Mrs. Flax. Tolerably, my dear---I met a couple of my youthful friends--whom I have not seen for an age ; we laughed and prattled--they greet thee kindly--and beg thou wilt not be offended at their having so long detained me.

Flax. Offended ! what gives thee pleasure, makes me happy.

Maillac. *Bravo, Monsieur le Counseillere ! vivent les maris raisonnables.*

Mrs. Flax. Hast thou at all missed me, my dear ?

Flax. My heart always misses thee.

Maillac. Very gallant, quite a french *tourneur*.

Mrs. Flax. Therefore, I will remain with thee, the whole day--I have invited some twenty friends--we will breakfast in the grove, and fancy ourselves in Pymont.

Maillac. Ha ! ha ! ha ! bravo ! *Madame la Conseillere* has charming ideas.

Mrs. Flax. (*curtsies*) My ideas are highly obliged to you.

Maillac. 'Faith, *Mesdames*--I entered Germany with very moderate expectations ; I had imbibed a frightful idea of German ladies--it was said a girl of fifteen blushed, through timidity, in taking off her glove--and at table, thrust her hands under the plate--fitting by the side of a man of fashion, with a dumb and vacant countenance--or else, unmannerly laughing--grimacing--and whispering to her play-fellows :--a girl of eighteen has ever tearful eyes--is plunged into an ocean of sensibility ; affects a partiality, and construes rudeness to a stranger, into constancy to her lover ; a woman of twenty, imagines she displays her virtue, in hanging back like a child, whenever a young man ap-

approaches her--and pouts if he utters any thing gallant:
a woman of twenty-five----

Mrs. Flax. Enough, Viscount--else we shall dispatch you to Hanover, to the man who has written a satirical book against our sex.

Maillac. I will write an Encyclopedie against him, and should I ever return to my country--evil betide the prater who sports a *bon mot* upon the German ladies.

Minna. And, as a reward, the German maidens should speedily convey you to the grave, as the female's poet laureat.

Maillac. It may, to be sure, be alledged---that Germany was at first, in part, truly delineated by the Emigrants--and that afterwards, the revolution, which in the south caused so much calamity--has extended through the north, taste and cultivation.

Minna. You are right, Viscount; a vulgar German girl, would laugh in your face--but I, who already feel the benign influence of your society, am so well bred as to make you a curtsy--and to walk away.

[*Exit.*]

Maillac. Ha! ha! ha! bravo.

Mrs. Flax. (*calling after her*) Whither Minna?

Minna (*turning to the stage*) O! I am impatient to see Emma, and relate my adventures---the greatest delight which a girl can bring home from a ball, is the prating about it for eight days after. [*Exit.*]

Maillac (*exclaims, and touches his shoulder*) What was that?--a drop of rain!

Mrs. Flax. O! no; the sky is clear, and will not interrupt our garden gala.

Maillac. But yet, do but see a wet spot upon my new frock.

Mrs. Flax. Perhaps a dew drop, from the trees?

Maillac. Madam--you yesterday pronounced sentence of death upon these cursed tall lindens.

Flax. My dear Emily, I implore mercy for these trees?

Mrs. Flax. Are they interesting to thee?

Flax. Inexpressibly so.

Mrs. Flax. I did not know it.

Flax. My poor sister and I planted them.

Mrs. Flax.

Mrs. Flax. (*astonished*) Thy sister! hast thou yet a sister?

Flax. I had one; but whether she survives, God knows?

Mrs. Flax. And thou never saidst a word to me about it.

Flax. Your pardon;--I dreaded the tearing open old wounds.

Mrs. Flax. Neither did I ever hear it mentioned in thy family.

Flax. My family, through false shame, avoids uttering my poor sister's name. She loved, against her parents' approbation, a young merchant from Lyons--she yielded--and absconded--For two and twenty years has she been dead to us--most of my family have forgotten her--I will never forget her!

Maillac. Lyon! Lyon! I was born in that neighbourhood. Ah, ay, the Lionese are very seducing.

Mrs. Flax. (*caressing her husband*) My dear husband, I was on the point of doing a very foolish thing--but it was an omission, on your part, not to have entrusted me sooner with so many important family occurrences--from this moment, these linden trees are under my special protection:--Viscount, I beg your frock's pardon.

Maillac. But seriously--I must change my dress.

Mrs. Flax. (*Smiling, and patting him on the shoulder*) What could be more agreeable to us women, than such noble occupation; my toilet also awaits me.

Flax. May I offer thee my arm?

Maillac. Fie, Counsellor Flaxland; that were too Germanic--permit me, (*presenting his arm*)

Mrs. Flax. Viscount, I have not yet been long enough your pupil--The German wife every now and then twitches my gown. (*She takes hold of her husband's arm.*) *A revoir Messieurs.* (*going*) I shall soon rejoin you.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IX. *The Viscount and HUGEL.*

Maillac. Bravo! an original German joke.

Hugel.

Hugel. I pity the French--if such actions constitute their jokes.

Maillac. What else?--matter for *Florian's Nouvelles*; or *Arnaud's epreuves du sentiment*.

Hugel. (*shrugs piteously his shoulders*).

Maillac. You shrug your shoulders, Sir--I must tell you--your manners displease me.

Hugel. I am sorry for it.

Maillac. We talk--we relate--we display our wit, but all in vain;--there you sit--looking like the deaf and dumb, going, for the first time, to Abbe D'Epees' seminary.

Hugel. I had rather resemble the unlearned scholar, than the uninvited tutor.

Maillac. But this must not be, Sir: at your age, with your figure, one may dash at any thing—you have beautiful teeth, you should laugh—you have large eyes, you should ogle—you are well made, but you know not how to give your body those bewitching careless contours which captivate the sex; the undulating line is the line of beauty—a young man should always display his lineation—with his arms—his legs—his whole body.

Hugel. (*smiling*) Unluckily I have been educated in the Cadet corps.

Maillac. Yes, yes—that is evident—it will be an arduous task to unbend you: *en attendant, mon cher ami*—if you will entrust yourself to my tuition.

Hugel. You honor me.

Maillac. But under one condition.

Hugel. What is it?

Maillac. I think I have observed you cast a presuming eye upon Miss Flaxland.—

Hugel. Presuming—why yes—it is, to be sure, presuming, to love such an enchanting girl.

Maillac. You love her then?

Hugel. I am not ashamed loudly to acknowledge the noblest feeling of my heart.

Maillac. And for her?

Hugel. I know not, Sir—by what title—

Maillac. What title?—*parbleu*—I will marry the lady.

Hugel. Why, so will I.

Maillac.

Maillac. She is rich—handsome—witty.

Hugel. She is good—sensible, and amiable.

Maillac. I will make her a Viscountess.

Hugel. And I, Mrs. Hugel.

Maillac. She cannot be both.

Hugel. Probably, she may decline being either.

Maillac. *Entre nous, mon cher ami, parlons raison.*

Hugel. Willingly, if it does not incommode you.

Maillac. Minna must be my bride.

Hugel. I would enter the lists, for such a lovely prize.

Maillac. What, when I tell you—that I will not afterwards lay the least restraint upon her.

Hugel. What means that?

Maillac. *Au contraire*—you will oblige me in becoming my wife's *cecil*.

Hugel. I have not learnt this in the Cadet corps.

Maillac. Love—sigh—languish—as much as you please, I do not even require your patience for the honeymoon—*l'ami de la maison* will be ever welcome.

Hugel. Your most obliged.

Maillac. But till after the wedding, I must entreat you to keep your distance.

Hugel. I am sorry—that my refractory heart.—

Maillac. But Sir—I entreat!—do you understand me? the tone in which I entreat—will fully explain to you, what impression a refusal must make upon me.

Hugel. The path of love is open, like the career of honor—we may march abreast—and he, who like you, Viscount, is conscious of his superior merit—what has he to fear?—

Maillac. (*disdainfully*) To fear!—O! no—but this happens to be now my fancy—I will not endure any rival.

Hugel. But for this time you will permit.---

Maillac. No—I permit nothing Sir—nothing!

Hugel. That sounds somewhat dictatorial.

Maillac. You compel me to speak plainly.

Hugel. Miss Flaxland can best decide this contest.

Maillac. I accept no lady for arbitrator, whilst I wear a sword.

Hugel. I am not fond of knight-errantry.

Maillac. *Tant pis pour vous*—for we must break a lance together.

Hugel,

Hugel. I have long ground down my sabre into the peaceful sickle.

Maillac. I would so much the more advise you to make your exit from a stage, where your part cannot be the most shining.

Hugel. Competition does not always prove an unpleasant character.

Maillac. You then persist in your obstinacy.

Hugel. (*shrugs his shoulders*)

Maillac. When I peremptorily announce to you, that we must cut each other's throat.

Hugel. I hope not.

Maillac. You must shut out hope.

Hugel. I consider all this exordium as a jest.

Maillac. There you are completely mistaken, Sir! Diable! I feel that your damn'd *sang froid* fevers my veins.

Hugel. I entreat, Viscount!

Maillac. Superfluous—you leave the field—or draw the sword.

Hugel. I shou'd be very reluctant.

Maillac. (*disdainfully*) So I perceive; you have not probably ever seen blood shed in the Cadet corps.

Hugel. If you then positively command it.

Maillac. You are still at liberty to decide.

Hugel. It is impossible for me to renounce Minna. (*he coolly takes out his gloves, and puts 'em on*)

Maillac. I think it my duty, as a nobleman, to caution you—that I was taught to fence by one of the most celebrated professors.

Hugel. I thank you for this generosity—but 'tis too late (*he draws his sword*)

Maillac. *Entre nous, mon ami*—I emigrated—thro' the misfortune of having killed all the staff of my regiment in duels.

Hugel. *Tant pis pour moi*—I acknowledge the peril, and tremble. (*he stands on his defence*)

Maillac. (*drawing back, confused*) How Sir?—what in earnest?

Hugel. How?—were you only in jest? (*advancing*)

Maillac. You do not recollect where we are.

Hugel. To be sure—it is not the proper place.

Maillac. Even so:—not for the world!—I would never

never so far forget myself—to profane by a duel, a spot hallowed by hospitality!—upon the frontiers, Sir—upon the frontiers, will I run you through the body—and escape. *[Exit in haste.]*

SCENE X. HUGEL, *solus.*

(He sheaths his sword laughing)

And such a creature enjoys here free egress and regress:—thus, many a coxcomb is endur'd, because he dances well—or because his hands are at command, if a lady wishes to wind off her thread---strange!—that forward fools---and absurd fashions---should be thus indulged: but women will wear the one, and tolerate the other---and they commonly ridicule both a month after---The saying---tell me thy company---and I will tell thee what thou art---cannot apply to the sex, for one finds lap-dogs and fools in favor, even with the most faultless female. *[Exit.]*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

SCENE II. CAPTAIN BRACH AND JOHN.

John: Hail! my lord—his honor the lord—
Brach: Hail! my lord—his honor the captain—
John: More welcome than an angel in full bloom—
Brach: I should before to become here only a guest—
John: How his honor will be rejoiced—
Brach: Why, has one here willing to enjoy an old friend?

ACT. II.

Dancing and wind music heard at a distance.

SCENE I. CAPTAIN ERLACH.

HO! ho!--it goes merrily here (*looking towards the spot, whence the music is heard*) hats---caps---feathers---dance and cards---whirling together---this suits me not! and this they call a summer pastime, when they transplant the card-table from the drawing-room to the garden---a swarm of gnats breaks up the party, and a drop of rain makes them scamper, as if it perforated thro' their skulls; there are those who slumber over the whole summer, and do not rouse themselves, until the autumnal equinox---and my old friend tolerates such uproar in his garden?---my honest sedate Flaxland, how can this be explain'd?---who knows---may be his daughter's wedding?---If some domestic would but cross me---to whisper in his ear---Erlach is arrived.---I will not step too near this wild hurley-burley---I wou'd rather loiter in the ale-house---and muse over the hundred year calendar---ho! there good friend!---why sure it is old John.

SCENE II. CAPTAIN ERLACH and JOHN.

John. Hey! hey!--by the Lord---his honor the lieutenant---or rather, already, his honor the captain.

Erlach. 'Tis all one---if I am but welcome.

John. More welcome than an aloe in full bloom---a rare guest!--a dear guest!

Erlach. I should be sorry to become here only a guest.

John. How his honour will be rejoiced!

Erlach. Why, has one here leisure to enjoy an old friend?

John.

John. We have talk'd daily about you: when the linden trees blossom'd—or the melons ripened—it was ever—what a pity, my friend Erlach is not here?

Erlach. Who was meanwhile dancing at the great harvest feast--where death swung the scythe.

John. Sometimes he complained, that you wrote so seldom.

Erlach. Writing was never my passion.

John. And that one could never exactly know where you were?

Erlach. And what boots it?--the soldier is every where--and no where—like the old man in Spieffen's tales of ghosts. I have existed of late, like the wandering Jew: but above all, I cannot endure, when friends are for ever scribbling each other their protestations of eternal friendship:—it must be self understood—for a friend is not like a girl—ador'd to-day—neglected to-morrow:—apropos of girls—how fares it with my Emma? is she bravely grown?

John. Tall, good, and beautiful—a rose—a double rose!

Erlach. I am glad of it;—here is company I perceive.

John. Yes, to my sorrow.

Erlach. Thou dost not like it old one?

John. Am not accusom'd to it.

Erlach. And thy master? neither was it his custom.

John. Ah me! here has been a great alteration.

Erlach. How so?

John. Our new lady—

Erlach. What? a new lady!—it is not surely so?—a second wedding!

John. Not know that!—why 'tis going into the third year—

Erlach. Indeed!—it is an unpleasant hearing—and he is deceived—it serves him right.

John. A good lady—but too gay—too frolicksome—it seems to me like two kings in one hive—such humming, buzzing, and swarming.

Erlach. Let the Counsellor know I am here—but secretly—that it may not be mouthed about.

John. I understand you.

[Exit.]

SCENE III. ERLACH *solus.*

Fares it then with marrying as with drinking—a debauch creates head-ache, and scarcely sober, we again take the glass:—No, Erlach, thou hast done many a crazy thing in thy life-time—but thou wilt not marry—that is not thy doom:—He who stands on the beach, beholds the swimmers exhaust themselves—yet plunges into the flood—and deserves his fate.

SCENE IV. ERLACH and the COUNSELLOR.

Flax. (Springs to him with open arms) Erlach! my Erlach! (the two friends press each other in silence to their hearts)

Erlach, (with sensibility) Old youngster! it joys me to see thee again: (he shakes him by the hand) I am truly glad!—thou art become rather thinner—but otherwise much the same:—why, I believe thou weep'st—sie for shame: (he turns away to conceal his own tears) hem! a fly makes my eye water.

Flax. I weep!—yes:—and thank thee for not joining the company, for there I must have suppressed these sweet tears.

Erlach. So—but why hast thou such assemblies?—it displeases me.

Flax. Of that hereafter:—let them dance and play—we have not met these eight years—dear Erlach, how fare you?—

Erlach. I retire as Captain.

Flax. Why so?

Erlach. Because it no longer pleased me—and because an old aunt had the sense to make me her heir.

Flax. I am glad of it—now we shall keep together.

Erlach. Truly—that was my intention;—but—

Flax. Wherefore a but?

Erlach. Thou hast ventured upon a second marriage, as I understand.

Flax. An excellent woman!—

Erlach. May be;—yet this style of living—thou knowest me—it is not after my way.

Flax. Dost think it is agreeable to me?

Erlach. Why dost thou suffer what thou could'st prevent?

Flax.

Flax. I am twenty years older than my wife—should I check her accustomed youthful amusements?

Erlach. Thou should'st have taken that sooner into consideration.

Flax. I lov'd!

Erlach. If thou preacheſt of love, I have done.

Flax. Has Erlach never acknowledged a miſtreſs?

Erlach. Friend, it is with love, as with the ſmall pox—who eſcapes it in youth, is ſeldom or ever infected.

Flax. (*ſmiling*) But when caught, it is the more dangerous;—tho' to be ſerious—in thy preſent ſituation, what could'ſt thou do more ſenſible than to marry?

Erlach. What? why ſhoot myſelf—that were more rational!

Flax. What, ever the inveterate woman hater?

Erlach. If the woman is worthleſs, it is bad—and if good, it is ſtill worſe.

Flax. Thou art in jeſt?

Erlach. Not in the leaſt—I ſhould love an amiable woman.

Flax. So much the better.

Erlach. So much the worſe:—a man who loves his wife, becomes the ſlave of his own heart—her deſires, which he may not be able to gratify, torment him more than her.

Flax. An amiable woman cheriſhes no ſuch deſires.

Erlach. But deſires are like duſt, that inſinuates itſelf thro' bolts and locks.

Flax. And by the breath of love is blown away.

Erlach. Item—who takes unto himſelf a wife, muſt wean himſelf from an hundred little habits; which, ſince ten years, have become a ſecond nature, and to which mankind generally adhere more obſtinately, than either to their virtues or vices:—every one has his favourite diſh—the chair he prefers ſitting upon—his place at table, and ſo forth:—ſuddenly, appears a female, as the houſehold legiſlatrix, and every thing muſt be moulded into another ſhape—the man wiſhes to dine on roaſt beef—but to pleaſe Madam, it muſt be fricaffeed—the carriage is ordered, when he would rather

rather be on horseback—and he abstains from tobacco, because she dislikes the smell.

Flax. (*smiling*) Trifles!

Erlach. Saplings have their roots—which on all sides expand themselves in the soil—and at my years, a man dislikes tearing up a flower, and even were it a weed.

Flax. At thy years! why man—thou standest as yet with at least one foot in thy youthful lustre.

Erlach. But let us finally bring the dear creature to her sick bed—she has head-aches, I tremble—no appetite, nor I neither—a fever, I am beside myself—and at length, a lying in—I am expiring thro' anxiety. No brother, this is not my calling.

Flax. But hast thou no conception of wedded bliss?

Erlach. O! yes:—thou lookest the picture of conjugal bliss!—and dost thou not include yonder tumultuous revelry in thy catalogue of wedded joys?

Flax. (*with a sigh*) That might be otherwise, and peradventure may be otherwise!

Erlach. Prithce say, where does the shoe pinch thee?

Flax. Ah! dear Erlach, more than one worm is gnawing at my heart.

Erlach. Speak the truth,—this manner of life:—thou lovest quiet—thou wouldst rather retire to thy farm?

Flax. Thro' love to my wife, I would roam from one carnival to the other; but the expence is too great—my purse cannot hold it out.

Erlach. Why dost thou not tell her so?

Flax. I cannot; under her parental roof, she was accustomed to this life: when a bride, she enquired with the most endearing confidence, the extent of my income:—I will most chearfully accommodate myself—answer me sincerely?

Erlach. And didst thou not do it?

Flax. I!—excuse me, my friend—I was ashamed!—live as hertofore, I replied, the means shall never fail you.

Erlach. And so it rested?

Flax. She desired to know the conduct she should adopt?

adopt? whether retirement was my object?—I shall conform entirely to your wishes, said she.

Erlach. But thou?

Flax. I could not bring myself to be, as it were, a kind of dictator, to constrain her: I studied to make her avoid recollecting, that she married a man turned of forty.

Erlach. That implies—thou wast ashamed of thy age.

Flax. May be.—

Erlach. And wouldst pass for a richer man, than thou art?

Flax. It is now too late to retract.

Erlach. Good sense, comes never too late—tho' she knocks at midnight.

Flax. That yet might pass—my heart disregards a diminished revenue—but—

Erlach. Yet, a but—

Flax. To thee, and to thee alone, I confess my weakness—I am tortured by the demon of jealousy—daily, must I behold a swarm of admirers fluttering around her—they are to be sure, mere foplings—but woe betide the man who imagines a fop cannot distress him—the necessity of amusement, has often made female virtue fall the victim of amusement.

Erlach. Why dost thou not tell her so?

Flax. It is true, she has an hundred times enquired whether I also was jealous?—one word, and I shall disperse all these butterflies.

Erlach. And an hundred times, thou hast answered her—

Flax. What I heretofore answered her, as bridegroom—that my confidence in her, was boundless.

Erlach. That is again, in other words, confessing, thou wast ashamed of thy jealousy.—

Flax. Yes, dear Erlach.

Erlach. Now is not false shame a damnable weakness—there would not be half so many miseries, could we but be persuaded, had we but the resolution, to declare ingenuously, where the pain lies.—Here now stands a man, who might be happy—whose wife requires nothing more than confidence—she wishes to be guided by him—will renounce whatever displeases him—but he—he is ashamed, and holds his tongue.

Flax. I feel my error—but want the resolution to amend.

Erlach. I must then occasionally lend thee some of my old bachelor frankness—be comforted! if thy wife resembles thy description of her, there may be help for thee—that is my affair:—now tell me how fares my little foundling? must I look for her in yonder circle?

Flax. Thou would'st seek her there in vain.

Erlach. I am glad of it—between ourselves brother, I have at heart the child's welfare—would she were but grown?

Flax. O! that is she already—

Erlach. And that she were marriageable?

Flax. O! that she is any day—

Erlach. You joke—she was a mere child, not taller than my rattan, when I was last here.

Flax. But in eight years it is easy to grow.

Erlach. Surely—but the lass is yet blood young—destiny threw the poor orphan in my way, and I will faithfully provide for her—I have neither child nor family—she shall call me papa, as heretofore—and when old Nick makes me lead down death's dance, I shall leave my purse to her keeping.

Flax. Hast thou discovered nothing of her origin?

Erlach. Not a syllable:—but no matter—I can be as good a father to her as another.

Flax. Why not rather her husband?

Erlach. Art thou in thy senses?

Flax. She so heartily rejoiced at thy arrival—almost like a bride.

Erlach. Ay, ay, did she so? then be quick—send her to me.

Flax. Instantly (*going*) thou hast sent thy baggage to my house?

Erlach. Not yet brother—thou knowest me—I must first find out, if all goes here as I like it.

Flax. My old friend—I cannot imagine—

Erlach. Go, go, all that will find its own way.

[*Exit Flaxland.*]

SCENE V. ERLACH *solus.*

We must first develope the lady's disposition—matrimony has many a time administered an opiate to friendship---and once fallen asleep, she awakes never
more :

more: it is, as if love exhausted the spirit from the flask---leaving friendship only the vapor---from which evil, the Lord deliver us;---my poor Flaxland---and thou persuadest me to marry---thou! a decoy bird---sing as thou listest, we shun the net and the lime-twig.

SCENE VI. ERLACH and EMMA.

Emma. (breathless and with outstretched arms) my deliverer! my benefactor!

Erlach. (draws back and avoids her embrace, surprised) Who are you?

Emma. Have you forgotten your Emma?

Erlach. (astonished) You! my Emma?

Emma. And why not thou as formerly?

Erlach. Can you be the identical Emma, who eight years since was not taller than my cane?

Emma. And who could only then lisp, what she now feels.

Erlach. Who sat upon my knee, and was afraid of my beard?

Emma. The same, whom you overwhelm with kindness---and yet repel her grateful exultation.

Erlach. (hesitating between doubt and affection) Well, well---if it be so, I am heartily glad---thou---you---hang ceremony---and run and kiss me dear girl.

Emma. That was the fatherly well-known voice.---
(*she embraces him*)

Erlach. (kisses her forehead, and contemplates her with admiration) Why, girl, thou art become tall and beautiful---thy eye is tender---and all thy ways delight me---dost see?---I cannot tell how folks feel who have children---but at this moment, I would not give a doit for a living daughter (*he touches her cheek*) my heart is so light and joyful---do not laugh at me, for letting the water trickle down my cheek---this is not usual with me.

Emma. I laugh!---I am so overcome, (*weeping*)

Erlach. Thou weepest! dear Emma, I cannot stand this---I must go---

Emma. (dries up her tears and smiles)

Erlach. So, so, my lovely girl, with such a smile thou could'st halt a squadron on full charge---but now for a rational word---it cannot go on thus---thou and thee are no longer fitting.

Emma.

Emma. Why not my father?

Erlach. But hang it, why your *father*?---do I then look so old? I am eight years younger than the Counsellor.---

Emma. Your bounties---

Erlach. What, again? (*quick*) Do you hear, dear Emma? (*gentle*) my good Emma—not a syllable more about it---it is not my way---and if it must be thee and thou, it may as well be as thy brother---at any rate a half brother, by a first marriage.

Emma. My heart does not require any relationship to love you.

Erlach. So much the better---little comes of relations who only love one another for what little they can get.

Emma. You wrote us so seldom---

Erlach. My writing master rap'd my knuckles when I made crooked letters, and I have since been always averse to writing.

Emma. Your goodness!—

Erlach. That is not the question---I could but sparingly provide for thee---for I had nothing beyond my lieutenant's pay---but it shall go better in future:---we have inherited, my Emma, an old aunt, God blest her, has bequeathed us a pretty snug estate---I have therefore retired from the service, and purposed taking my winter quarters here with you.

Emma. O! that is delightful.—

Erlach. Yes—but the style of living here, is not after my fashion—if it goes on at this rate every day.—It is true—the Counsellor has told me that my Emma dislikes this bustle.

Emma. Custom has made solitude dear to me.

Erlach. Custom only!—not then inclination—not impulse?

Emma. Do not therefore think the worse of a young girl—whose heart has sometimes throb'd, when viewing at a distance the jocund crew.

Erlach. Well! why didst thou not make one among them?

Emma. Because it did not become me—because I, a poor orphan—must subsist by others' liberality—because—

Erlach. Because—well—fully out with it.

Emma.

Emma. Before you—I will not conceal my weakness—because I could not flatter myself in splendid circles to supply thro' innate worth, the superiority of my companions in dazzling finery.

Erlach. In plain words—that signifies—thou wast ashamed of thy wardrobe.

Emma. Not here—not in the society of superior beings—but yonder—you know on what weak foundations—the world grounds its fickle judgment.

Erlach. Another instance of false shame—dear Emma—a maiden is richly drest—when adorned in the simple drapery of innocence—but thou must not want for any thing—now I like such an apron with pockets, it looks so domestic—but the pockets must not be empty.—*(he endeavours unobserved to put a purse in her pocket)*

Emma. *(much confused)* No, no—in God's name, not so—you have misunderstood me—you humble me—I have more than I want—if you love me take back the money.—

Erlach. Be but quiet *(he replaces the money)* I have not managed this cleverly—pardon me—I am too downright—the art of giving is a fine art—and, unfortunately, I do not understand it.

Emma. What I meant to confess as a weakness, wears the appearance of effrontery—I am considered in this house, rather as a daughter or a sister—How often have they endeavoured to force upon me trinkets and fine dresses—but it becomes me not—I may still perhaps have parents—pining in poverty—whilst I am revelling in satin—I am perchance but a common peasant girl—and shall brilliants glitter in my ears?

Erlach. A peasant girl!—no, indeed, no!

Emma. *(eager and anxious)* Know you perchance any thing of my origin?

Erlach. Nothing dear child—only vague surmises.

Emma. O! relate to me these surmises—the tale of my deliverance; when you quitted us eight years since, I was a child, and could not understand it—it is true, that afterwards the counsellor has often related to me what he learnt from you—but the little local incidents—which can only interest me—escaped his attention—and how often a trifle is a clue to the most important discoveries!—I will assist you with my faint infantine recollections—I will describe to you my mother's

mother's figure---perhaps she yet survives!---gracious God---she may be still alive!---

Erlach. Possibly!---but not probably!---we made good our landing in the night---surprized Charlestown---our people were disguis'd by liquor---they became incendiaries---the town flam'd at every corner---and those who sprung from the fire fell by the bayonet!---no commander---no subordination---I think with horror on that infernal night---I had shouted myself hoarse---tho' the thunder would have roll'd unheard---At length the day dawned---and enlightened the murd'rous scene---covered with dust and blood---blackened by smoke and ashes---our men laid snoring around---all was horror---and in that stillness of desolation, I scrambled sword in hand over the smoking ruins---when suddenly I heard a faint murmuring under my feet---I listened---I removed away the glowing fragments---when an infant countenance looked piteously at me---and cried mother! mother! it was thou, dearest Emma!---thy body laid half buried in foot---a miracle had preserv'd thy existence---I loosen'd the foot---one of thy little hands got free---and thy first use of it was to waft me a kiss---this inexpressibly affected me---Patience, poor worm, said I---thou mayest yet be relieved---my groom was near---and together we rais'd thee unhurt into the face of day---I took thee in my arms---and thou clung around my neck---To my mother!---saidst thou in English--to my mother!---thou repeatedst in French---and at last in German---because thou thoughtest I did not understand thee.---Who is thy mother? I enquir'd---here in the narrow street---the good woman---at the yellow house---But there were no more---neither narrow or broad streets---neither woman or house---I exerted every effort to make some discovery---the few who had saved themselves were crawled into the woods---we re-embark'd---What was to be done?---could I abandon thee among the burning ruins?---My captain permitted my taking thee with me---he was mov'd when he beheld thee---for thou wast so little---so little---that I cannot even now comprehend---how you couldst grow thus tall.

Emma. Alas!---and do you not know more?

Erlach (*shrugs his shoulders*) We made a safe voyage to Europe---and thou foundest an asylum in my friend's house.

Emma.

Emma. Could I not once lisp out to you my name?

Erlach. Thy christian name, Emma---which makes me think thee British---but thy French and German were equally correct---thou art therefore of no vulgar origin---thy linen was mark'd A. M. and this is all I know.

Emma. O! would I were once there!--could I but view my parents?--I should certainly recognize them---my father was a dark thin man---and my mother!--her form I can never forget---she look'd so pale---and wept so frequently---and now, perhaps, she weeps oftener than ever---and I dare not mingle my tears with her's.

Erlach. Compose thyself dear Emma---I see the holiday squadron prancing down the alley---such tears are too precious for creatures who have whirl'd away their bit of feeling in the dance.

Emma. I cannot just now recover myself, but suffer me to go? (*She retires*)

Erlach. (alone) Excellent girl!--only a pity, that she is grown so tall and handsome: the heart cannot be so unreserved as formerly, and--thou--faints on the tongue---I will, however, remove my trunk hither.

SCENE VII. ERLACH, MRS. FLAXLAND, MINNA, HUGEL, and EMMA.

Mrs. Flax. Welcome Captain; heartily welcome! I just now understand from my husband---

Erlach (with cool politeness) Have I the honor to be in Mrs. Flaxland's presence?

Mrs. Flax. If it does not give you more satisfaction than honor--I must count another wish ungratified.

Maillac. Bravo! that is fine.

Erlach. Your wishes are very temperate.

Mrs. Flax. We have been expecting you for an eternity.

Erlach. So much the worse for me--for the expected seldom answer the expectation.

Mrs. Flax. I have an hundred times had your manner and appearance repeated to me--for when I hear of interesting persons--I love to sketch an outline--which at last seldom resembles the original: for example--I have always figur'd you to be a lively, jovial

man--

man—with the nose of an eagle, and the eye of a falcon.—

Erlach. Your most obedient.

Mrs. Flax. I would have wager'd Wieland's Musarion, your eyes were not of such a dark hazel.

Maillac. Ha! ha! ha!—bravo!—

Erlach. A cheerful spirit sometimes posts stern sentinels—to check marauders—(*fixing his eye on Maillac*)

Mrs. Flax. But Captain—if friendship undertakes to seize a heart by surprise—

Erlach. Friendship only surprises fools.

Mrs. Flax. You are right—I should have said by conquest—she then eludes mistrust, who guards the outpost—in short, I am resolved to be your friend—that I may no longer continue your rival.

Erlach. Rival!—

Mrs. Flax. Yes Sir, yes: more than once have I been heartily jealous of you—not a day passes but my husband expatiates upon you with enthusiasm;—it is a passion—a longing!—were I suspicious—I shou'd have fear'd to behold in you, a second Chevalier d'Eon.

Maillac. Ha! ha! ha! *bravissimo*.

Mrs. Flax. Viscount, I excuse you from the duty of applauding each of my words.

Minna. Ha! ha! ha! bravo, *bravissimo*.

Maillac. (*to Minna*) Little censor, thou shalt repay me this.

Minna. What, will you make more verses upon me?

Erlach. It nearly comes to my turn to cry *bravo*!

Minna. (*to Erlach*) Will you again restore the word to honor?

Erlach. (*smiling*) Indeed! my beautiful unknown!

Mrs. Flax. How! do you not know your friend's daughter?

Erlach. (*surprised*) What! can that be Minchen? your pardon, Mademoiselle Wilhelmina!

Minna. O! keep ever by Minna—otherwise, for the first time, I shall grieve at being grown tall.

Erlach. Yes, indeed, you are grown tall and handsome.

Minna. And can also blush brave Captain.

Erlach. Flattery is not my way—beauty is like nobility—it does not make the wise vain.

Maillac

Maillac. Ah! Captain, she is as cruel as she is beautiful.

Erlach. (to *Minna*) An admirer I presume?

Minna. Yes, a bit of one.

Mrs. Flax. Monsieur le Vicomte de Maillac---a French emigrant.

Erlach. So, so---your humble servant.

Mrs. Flax. And here is Herr von Hugel, a worthy country gentleman.

Erlach. That is my object---to this gentleman I am already nearly related---for we Swiss are naturalized to a country life.

Mrs. Flax. Your aim Captain, to join the Company, where you shall here a medley of names and titles announced.

Erlach. I had rather be introduced to a bed of hyacinths---for when I understood this to be a premier noble---and that a Cardinal de Fleury---I should at least be rewarded by the smell.

Maillac. Monsieur le Capitaine, seems to be infected with the new philosophie?

Erlach. Infected!---Bravo! the expression is select---we shall soon begin to build quarantine houses on the frontiers---to stop travellers, posting into the country, infected with the plague of reason.

Mrs. Flax. You bear yourself a name of renown.

Erlach. Unfortunately: it has often tormented me; if perchance presented at court, it was buzz'd thro' the circle---are you descended from the famous Rudolph Erlach? my God, yes---but am I a hair the better, or the taller for it?---I Hans Erlach, serve God and my king to the best of my ability---whoever likes me on that score, let us shake hands as friends: but let no man touch his bonnet to me on account of Rudolph Erlach, whose bones moulder under Strasburg Cathedral.

Mrs. Flax. Well, my gallant Captain, I give you my hand, as the friend of Hans Erlach---but you must not forget, that when with wolves, we must join in the howl.

Erlach. Your pardon:---that is one of the senseless bye-words---we should never howl with wolves.

Mrs. Flax.

Mrs. Flax. But all this while, my poor husband is confined among them; let us hasten to release him! (*she drags him away with her*)

Erlach. (*following her reluctantly*) I am your prisoner---and assuredly, prisoners may be made to serve as pioneers. [Exit.]

SCENE VIII. MINNA, the VISCOUNT, Herr von HUGEL.

Maillac. *Le capitaine*—is rather *massif*.

Hugel. No summer-house—such buildings shelter friendship in winter.

Minna. Shall we follow, to the company?

Maillac. You joke—the comet never asks his tail, whether it will follow!

Minna. Ha! ha! ha!—do you know that the tails of comets, are said to be composed from an exhalation of vapours.

Maillac. Compos'd as you please.

Minna. Are you of that opinion *Herr von Hugel*?

Hugel. I can find no comparison to *Minna*, equal to herself.

Minna. (*throws herself upon the bank*) Well then gentlemen—we will remain here—I am in no talking vein—I must be amused—and care not how.

Maillac. Could I avail myself of this *heure de Berger*, and discourse of my love.

Minna. No, no;—do you not hear? I will be amused!

Maillac. Perhaps you may like reading? I have here a volume of *Rousseau's Nouvelle Heloise*.

Minna. A book I dare not read—papa does not permit me.

Hugel. I have *Woldemar's Jacobis* in my pocket.

Minna. Emma and I have read that twice through, but tell me Viscount—why is your book stiled *la Nouvelle Heloise*?

Maillac. Probably the author's caprice—for I cannot discover thro' the whole work, one syllable about an *Heloise*.

Hugel. (*smiles*)

Minna. It must however bear some reference.

Maillac. Most assuredly.

Minna,

Minna. Heloise must have been extremely beautiful.

Maillac. (*presenting Minna his snuff-box*) I can have the honor to shew you her portrait.

Minna. Does it resemble her?

Maillac. Like two dew drops.

Minna. (*cunningly*) Perhaps you were acquainted?

Maillac. Not with her—she has been dead some years—but I knew her uncle Fulbert—an honest old fellow—there is a copper-plate of him.

Minna. You smile, Herr von Hugel.

Hugel. I participate in your amusement.

Minna. We were conversing about the uncle; Viscount—I suppose a person of some consequence?—

Maillac. A financier—one does not investigate these gentry so precisely—they keep an excellent table.

Minna. And Abelard?—

Maillac. Was at that time, *avocat au parlement*, and had acquir'd some reputation.

Minna. Likewise I presume an elderly man?

Maillac. In the prime of life—

Hugel. (*smiling*) O, yes!—he can scarcely be more than six or seven hundred years old—

Maillac. How, Sir?—

Hugel. At least, Bayle asserts, he was born in the eleventh century.

Maillac. That is false—I must know better than the obscure person you mention.

Hugel. Bayle! an obscure person!

Maillac. In short, Sir, he, who can to his face accuse a man of my condition of an untruth.—He, at least betrays—that he is no Frenchman.—This Abelard is a man between forty and fifty, which I assert upon my honor!—understand me, upon my honor; and there the affair is decided.—Should you, notwithstanding this opposition, remain in doubt, I am prepared to give you, in the adjoining field, the most unequivocal proofs.—
(*He bows to Minna, casts a haughty look at Hugel, and*
[Exit.

SCENE IX. MINNA and HUGEL.

Minna. Why, this is a challenge in due form.

Hugel. So it appears.

Minna. And you do not go?

D

Hugel.

Hugel. Because I already know thro' experience—that on foot there is no overtaking him.

Minna. It would be comical for you to fight about Abelard.

Hugel. Men have often cut one another's throats, for objects equally insignificant.

Minna. And have been chronicled as martyrs.

Hugel. Presumption is also a passion—and our passions are frequently but a stimulus, to be roused by opposition.

Minna. This should not be acknowledged to us girls,

Hugel. Why not?

Minna. Because it might make our sex mistrust the love of your's.

Hugel. Did I then mention love?

Minna. Is not love also a passion?

Hugel. Not true love—which ennobles our existence, and becomes the innate impulse to all that is good and great.

Minna. I doubt—whether this definition would suit the taste of my sex?—We are but too fond to excite passions—and to make philosophy ridiculous, reason, crown'd with a fool's cap, kneeling at the feet of beauty—an engaging picture.

Hugel. But only in water colours—

Minna. Girls are seldom judges.

Hugel. Nor will they be judges—

Minna. Detraction, my good Sir.

Hugel. I wish you were open to demonstration.

Minna. We have demonstration at heart, but men in our heads.

Hugel. Heart and head, should promote a friendly intercourse.

Minna. O! such an intercourse were too tedious.

Hugel. Or marry!—

Minna. Wedlock would be yet more tedious.

Hugel. You are not serious—for I am confident that at your golden wedding, you will defend holy matrimony, with all the animation of youth.

Minna. At my golden wedding! heaven forbid!—to survive that, I must at latest marry to-morrow.

Hugel. Which must wholly depend upon yourself.

Minna.

Minna. Upon me?—comical enough! as if it depended on one's self to resolve, to day I will give away my heart.

Hugel. Why not?—as easy as to declare, to-day my ear shall not be shut against the poor beggar—to-day, I will comfort the unfortunate.

Minna. My sagacious Sir—you over-rate the worth of a maiden's heart.

Hugel. I only alluded to your own.

Minna. Which I conjecture—you cannot comprehend.

Hugel. I! not comprehend your heart?—then, must the sweet remembrance of my childhood be obliterated!—whither are flown those happy times—when your father resided on his estate—and lived in friendly intercourse with mine—when each fine summer evening, assembled us children in the village—you beckon'd me kindly from afar—and called me, thou, and Augustus!—when suddenly, the frolicksome Minna vanish'd from our sports—to share her penny with a beggar—or to assist a fallen child.—When she industriously gather'd the strawberries for her father—or selected flowers to celebrate her mother's birth-day.—O! Minna! Minna—I—not know your heart?

Minna. (*distrain*) Those were happy hours!

Hugel. Blest with innocence and peace of mind.

Minna. Nothing can be compar'd with the enchantment of our early youth.

Hugel. Except it be the charm of first love.

Minna. The one as transitory as the other.

Hugel. A random observation from the great world.—In cities every thing is painted—landscapes upon canvases—health upon the cheeks—and love upon the stage—in cities, words are appreciated by fashion—in the country, they flow from feeling—in cities they say, your obedient servant—in the country, good day;—the first is politeness—the second heartiness;—I love you, exclaims the townsman, with a grimace—I love thee, says the countryman, with a glistering eye—the first repeats the word an hundred times a day—the other expresses it but once in his life—To the one love is a mere pastime—to the other the enjoyment of life—here a gawdy flower, the shew of a summer's day—and there a shel-

tering foliage from rain, and the parching sun—an instrument never out of tune, thro' change of weather.

Minna. I now hear for the first time, that you are also a poet.

Hugel. (*drooping*) O! my throbbing heart!—thy sensibility is misconstrued into fiction.

Minna. I begin to fear thee—romance is infectious.

Hugel. Romance—I have been but too much inur'd! to hear the genuine taste for love and nature thus abus'd—I therefore rivetted my heart—and threw not the key into the ocean of the world—but treasur'd it, as unfolding the ideas of my hopes and wishes—I wish'd to discover the female, to whom the unpresuming youth was more deserving than the pert coxcomb—who, at a gala ball—would not pass with a contemptuous leer, the rustic noble—because unpracticed in the dance—and who, at the sumptuous board, did not mistake silence for dullness:—Ah! I thought to have found her.—

Minna. (*in a soft hesitating tone*) And were mistaken!—

Hugel. (*with enthusiasm*) No, no—I am not mistaken!—This tender inquietude manifests your beautiful soul—yes, I often rejoic'd to behold, amidst the bustle of the world, your lovely countenance, clouded with listlessness and *ennui*—that where your heart was not interested, you could display your judgment.—O! fly these baneful circles, which oppose bulwarks against reason—card-houses against licentiousness—where those style themselves friends, who dissipate one another's time; where one is familiariz'd to love—by calculating, that together the revenues suffice to fit up a house—where the possessor is reputed generous, if, on a Sunday afternoon, he distributes twelve-pence among a dozen poor—and he is esteemed pious, thro' forbearance to talk of his religion, from the fear of being bewildered and misled—where the honest fellow inwardly despises the powerful scoundrel, to whom he is compelled to pay obedience—where we compassionate the distress'd, whilst shuffling the cards—and by the third trick have utterly forgotten them:—in short, where egotism mingles with interest, fear produces meanness—and the habitude of vice, masks its deformity. Fly from this pestiferous atmosphere to rural scenes, where every noble feeling

is excited—there is the heart unfolded to the good and beautiful—there, love and friendship are not visitors, but residents—God is honor'd, when with wondering transport we view the starry heaven—We give to the poor to relieve their wants—vanity mingles not her ostentatious gifts, among the precious contributions of benevolence—there is mirth without cards, and conversation without detraction—one is not ashamed to esteem oppressed worth, and loudly to proclaim, a scoundrel—a scoundrel. O! I possess only a slender patrimony—but, if to all the blessings which industry, fortune, and my heart bestow upon me, Minna designs to contribute love—my little paradise will only want a ridge of lofty rocks, to make it impenetrable to envy.— You are silent.—The lively Minna casts down her eyes, and contemplates the flowers in her bosom.

Minna. Methinks Herr von Hugel, it is a proof of my esteem for you—that, at this instant, my levity forsakes me.

Hugel. Your esteem is my pride, but only love gives bliss.

Minna. Ere I answer you, confess to me sincerely—what proportion does my figure hold in your love?

Hugel. Sincerely, my best Minna—I have never examin'd myself, as to that point.

Minna. Then do it now—it materially interests me to know it:—Should I, think you, have engag'd your affections, had I been ugly and deformed?—I appeal to your honor and honesty, for a faithful answer.

Hugel. Well then, why should I disavow an impression, which youth and beauty produce in every well organiz'd frame;—I shou'd love you, even were you plain—but whether I should have so clearly recogniz'd your soul, concealed in such unseemliness, I cannot venture to pronounce.

Minna. And supposing the small-pox should suddenly disfigure me, or if I be not what I seem?

Hugel. What a supposition!

Minna. Girls are skilful in concealing their imperfections.

Hugel. My life upon the venture.

Minna. You shall venture nothing—she, who will deceive an honest man, cannot deserve his love—*(she takes*

his hand) I—Herr von Hugel, highly esteem you—something more perhaps—but——

Hugel. No but.

Minna. I must confess to you——

Hugel. (*trembling*) That your heart is engaged?

Minna. My heart is free.

Hugel. Well?—

Minna. I am—I appear——

Hugel. O! you are what you appear——

Minna. No! no! I——

(*the musicians at a distance play a waltz.*)

Minna. (*uneasy and confused*) Dancing is renewed—shall we join the company?

Hugel. Without indulging me with an answer?

Minna. Yes, yes, I will answer you soon, tho' not now:—this waltz—it delights me—come, come along, and let us dance!

Hugel. It is out of my power at present to dance.

Minna. Indeed!—the music is so inviting—you will not then?—excuse me Herr von Hugel, I must look out for a partner. (*she hurries off*)

Hugel. (*looks after her amaz'd*) Is it possible?—God! is this possible?—the acknowledgment of heart-felt passion dissipated by a wretched waltz—the discovered an honest man, but she sought a dancer.—Now then farewell, the holy belief in innocence and nature—away Hugel, and hide thyself under thy thatch—water thy salads—and scare the birds from thy domain, that their notes may not remind thee of this cursed waltz. [*Exit.*]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I. CAPTAIN ERLACH.

ABUNDANCE of eating and drinking—a peal of laughter—but no pure enjoyment:—he who laughs with all his might, is not of course always happy—one laughs at his own wit, and if he be rich, or powerful, the circle is constrained to join in chorus—Another laughs at a *double entendre*, of his own painful invention, and ogles the ladies around to enjoy their confusion—here titters a gosling, to disguise an awkward timidity—and there leers an ape, because his neighbour's tail is a hair too long:—here is a good soul of a mother, relating her offspring's display of genius, and compelling her yawning hearers to join in the admiration—yonder, is a sketch discussing, from the magazine of scandal, and a malignant smile blasts the opening bud—when they return home, says his Excellency to her Excellency, what a delicious party—how heartily we have laugh'd:—No: this is not after my way—the most rational among the groupe, seems to be the Counsellor's lady—a canary bird among bullfinches—warbling to them, till they imitate a tune or two—if sometimes her wild notes escape her, they are lovely melodious tones:—could she but know how her husband is chagrined?—but patience—she shall learn it. Once domesticated together a couple of months under one roof—a couple of months!—why Erlach, can'st thou swim so long in this strange element?—why not?—Flaxland is my friend—and Emma!—What choaks thee old boy?—daughter—sister—friend—no matter how I call her, I dearly love her, and having once for all saved her from perishing—why—ay—so—a good girl—only one thing in her displeases me—she should not, mean while, have grown eight years older.

SCENE II. EMMA and ERLACH.

Emma. (*looking about for some one and perceives Erlach*) Ah! you here?

Erlach. I am here, my dear child—were you looking for me?

Emma. No :—I was seeking—I want to speak with some one, who has crept into some bush, God knows where. (*she gives him a friendly nod*) [Exit.

Erlach. (*solus*) Most obedient!—that was not me—thinks so pretty in her!—she might as well have remained a couple of minutes, and chatted a word or two about the weather: hem!—whom can she be seeking?—who is this some one? and what can she have so urgent to say to him?—Some one!—why that may be a female—tho' I will wager it is a man!—O! ho, Miss Emma—perhaps a secret of the heart :—well! what is that to me?—am I not her—her father?—she dared not amuse me about the blank nobody: I, however, surely deserved a particle of confidence, just for a word at parting—to have been whispered this somebody is nam'd so and so—but so it is, when girls become eight years older,

SCENE III. ERLACH and MRS. FLAXLAND.

Mrs. Flax. My dear Captain, you court solitude!

Erlach. It is difficult to meet her in these quarters.

Mrs. Flax. Is that praise, or blame?

Erlach. I never dispute upon taste.

Mrs. Flax. I understand—but do not misconstrue into taste, what with me, is only custom—and not seldom a tiresome custom.

Erlach. What hinders you from shaking off this tiresome custom?

Mrs. Flax. My husband likes this manner of life.

Erlach. He like this life?—

Mrs. Flax. If we are alone, he instantly becomes uneasy—inquires twenty times in an hour, if I am not vapour'd—if I will not make such and such a visit—and is not easy till I order the carriage.

Erlach. And accompanies you?

Mrs.

Mrs. Flax. Seldom! only when I earnestly entreat him.

Erlach. What can he do at home alone?

Mrs. Flax. (*playful*) God knows:—peradventure, he makes gold—at least, when I return, he always receives me as cordially, and as kindly, as if he had discovered a treasure.

Erlach. Ha! this grieves me.

Mrs. Flax. How!—what grieves you?

Erlach. To hear that my honest friend, since our separation, has learnt to disguise himself.

Mrs. Flax. Disguise! how so?

Erlach. No such alteration occurs to a man at his years.

Mrs. Flax. Speak more intelligibly.

Erlach. I had rather be silent—we do not as yet know enough of one another.

Mrs. Flax. Not know one another! when my husband gave me a right to his affection, he gave me also a right to your friendship.

Erlach. Friendship and old hock are good—but mixt with a sharpness, not perhaps to every one's taste.

Mrs. Flax. You excite my curiosity more and more:—I beseech you Captain, don't count me among the formal beings who screw up their mouths at a truism, because it is somewhat bitter:—our acquaintance is yet young—but were I flumbering on a bed of roses, and a stranger preserved me from a viper's sting, this stranger would become my friend.

Erlach. If you think thus—

Mrs. Flax. Indeed, I think thus:—to please my husband is my most earnest wish—to be sure the difference in our ages is considerable, and I did not fall into his arms thro' love, but was somehow surpriz'd into them thro' esteem:—we have not acted a romance together—no light'ning has inflamed, but a chearing marriage fun has constantly animated us: be you then animated to speak confidently—but, notwithstanding this declaration, should my presence any way confuse you, I will place myself behind these trees—forget my being here, and you need not spare me in a soliloquy.

Erlach. Bravo!—that is my way, those who think thus,
I esteem

I esteem highly—and to those I esteem highly, I speak the truth.

Mrs. Flax. Forward then—

Erlach. How can a woman with such an excellent head and heart, endure so many fools about her;

Mrs. Flax. Alas! dear Captain—should we banish fools—our circles would become very circumscrib'd.

Erlach. The smaller the better—sense and sociability are guests who disappear if they behold lights at every window.

Mrs. Flax. But folly lends good sense a foil.

Erlach. She does not want it—and if your husband has pretended to like this manner of life, he has deceived you.

Mrs. Flax. That would grieve me.—

Erlach. He thought this indulgence was due to your youth.

Mrs. Flax. Then he little knew me.

Erlach. He feared you might imagine—

Mrs. Flax. What?

Erlach. That he was jealous.

Mrs. Flax. Jealous!—you joke!

Erlach. Should I for example assure you, that last night he never closed an eye—that his imagination kept him on the rack till morning—that he was oblig'd to force himself away, when he heard your carriage draw up.

Mrs. Flax. I am all astonishment!

Erlach. It gnaws my heart-strings, sigh'd he mournfully—I endeavour in vain to conquer this weakness.

Mrs. Flax. My God!—why did he not say so to me?

Erlach. False shame—the demon of confidence.

Mrs. Flax. Well, I have hitherto left our company to a chance medley—in future, he shall have the selection—he shall be my constant companion—this very day he shall make out a list, and name the persons whose acquaintance he esteems.

Erlach. The list will be very short!

Mrs. Flax. Not so;—there are here many worthy, sensible characters.

Erlach. O! yes—but the more there are—so much the

the more difficult for an individual, who is no Croesus, to treat them all.

Mrs. Flax. What do you mean?—Flaxland is rich!

Erlach. He was!—

Mrs. Flax. How?

Erlach. He may yet be called in good circumstances—but if his property continues to be melted, as it has been for these last three years—

Mrs. Flax. My good Sir, you alarm me.—

Erlach. Where the outgoings so far exceeded the income—

Mrs. Flax. Can it be possible?

Erlach. He might, peradventure, 'ere long have been compelled to infringe upon the maternal patrimony of his children.

Mrs. Flax. My God!—why did he not tell me this?

Erlach. False shame!—the less riches, the less esteem.

Mrs. Flax. But not in my eyes.—

Erlach. He has long wished to retire to his farm.

Mrs. Flax. Willingly;—heartily;—this present evening.

Erlach. But he fears at your age, that country fameness—

Mrs. Flax. O! how it distresses me—that my husband did not think it worth while to appreciate my character—that a stranger should repose more confidence in me, than a man of whose affection I am proud—that I should injure his children, and destroy his peace of mind!—that I should dissipate the savings of paternal solicitude and maternal affection!—why did he not put me to the proof? why did he suppose that a swarm of coxcombs could entertain me better than domestic quiet, and the converse of a well-inform'd man! O! Captain Erlach, men so often reproach us for our weakness—it is no weakness—it is the soul's softness—and it chiefly depends upon you to mould it into goodness—but you conceive that female love ill accords with truth—you require health and soundness of soul, and yet poison it with flattery;—but I am complaining and arguing where I should be acting—your hand,
 dear

dear Captain, you shall witness and acknowledge that I merit your confidence. [*Exit, in great emotion.*]

Erlach. (alone) Why right! this is my way—if she keeps her word—I remain here:—but if I stay, the lass must alter her manner, and not run away from me—she must have confidence in me—I should like however to learn if she has found her plaguy somebody?

SCENE IV. ERLACH and HUGEL.

Hugel. (enters in a deep reverie)

Erlach. Here comes one who has disentangled himself from the Babel, and tries to compose his ears:—welcome Herr von Hugel—I wish you joy.

Hugel. (starting) Of what?

Erlach. Of solitude. Some good folks imitate the nightingales—when surrounded by clamor they are silent—you did not seem yonder to be in your right place.

Hugel. I at least resemble the nightingales, by feeling myself, in my proper place only in the country.

Erlach. You are complimenting yourself.

Hugel. Were my attachment to a country life, a privilege, I should share this privilege with every clown.

Erlach. Would he thereby lose ought of his worth?

Hugel. Yes; with many.—

Erlach. If you allude to the French locusts, who here infect the air—you may be right.

Hugel. No, no:—better men—perhaps the best!—yonder Frenchman for example—I dare not presume to appreciate him—but he pleases—

Erlach. Whom?—

Hugel. He is prepossessing.

Erlach. To whom?

Hugel. (sighing) He is probably beloved.—

Erlach. (more uneasy than inquisitive) By whom?

Hugel. Ah! by a lady, who fails in nothing, but the faculty to discern the heart, which reflects her image.

Erlach. And this lady! for as to the heart, I know it!—

Hugel. You know it!

Erlach.

Erlach. Yes, without the faculty of looking into it—but the lady?—

Hugel. That, methinks, you might easily have divined—for I said expressly—that nothing fail'd her.

Erlach. Most obedient—(*aside*) he certainly spoke of Emma. (*loud*) you believe then, she is partial to the Frenchman.

Hugel. I must almost fear it.

Erlach. (*half to himself*) Hem!—should he be the some one, she so anxiously sought!

Hugel. (*eager*) How!—she sought?—

Erlach. A somebody—the devil take him—with such haste, she was near tumbling over me.

Hugel. Indeed!

Erlach. She was panting to speak with him.

Hugel. I lament the search was fruitless—as an hour before, he walk'd away with a couple of courtiers.

Erlach. (*murmuring to himself*) Accursed coxcomb—such a girl, without a failing—only, too old—too old—

Hugel. How too old?—she is only sixteen.

Erlach. So much the worse.

SCENE V. EMMA enters, and exclaims on perceiving HUGEL,

Ah!—are you there?

Hugel. (*surprized*) I, Madam?

Erlach. (*amazed*) Hem—

Emma. I have been looking for you above an hour.

Hugel. I was wandering in the meadow, not supposing that here, I could be mis'd.

Erlach. So he was the some one whom you sought?

Emma. Yes, dear captain—I have something of importance, to communicate to Herr von Hugel.

Erlach. Probably also a secret?

Emma. Emma has no secret for her benefactor—but it concerns a friend.

Erlach. (*feelingly*) So, so—I comprehend—constraint is not my way—I shall soon enough learn the secret from the bridegroom. [Exit.

SCENE

SCENE VI. EMMA and HUGEL.

Emma. Herr von Hugel, I have a message to you.

Hugel. If this message gives me pain, which I greatly apprehend, there has been at least the consideration to choose an allwaging messenger.

Emma. I hope to be the messenger of peace.

Hugel. Peace precludes discord—and I knew not—

Emma. You have told my friend, you lov'd her.

Hugel. Only told—

Emma. No sophistry—by your leave.

Hugel. Well then—to my sorrow, I love Minna!

Emma. Why to your sorrow?—

Hugel. I am a plain countryman—which for a moment, I ceas'd to recollect—Minna has deeply humbled me—it will never again be forgotten.

Emma. Humbled!—that is a hard expression.

Hugel. The occasion was harder than the expression—she, who treats a serious proposal, as a jest—she, whose levity hurries a man with the tears of love in his eyes to a dance—let me say, does not that imply contempt?

Emma. Dear Herr von Hugel—beware of an intemperate judgment—you may repent it at Minna's feet;—Do you make no allowance for a poor girl's embarrassment?—I assure you, that most of the follies of which we are accused towards your sex, arise from embarrassment—how, if Minna was heartily well disposed to you?—but only shy of a certain confession, which she feared, might in the eyes of the lover, diminish the worth of the beloved.

Hugel. (*smiling sarcastically*) You are supposing a case?—

Emma. I suppose nothing—there are certain points, Herr von Hugel, which to our sex are very important, but which, fortunately, do not always strike your eyes—should a girl be not completely what she seems to be, she may, if she can, deceive the public, but not the man whom she intends to marry.

Hugel. Minna is not what she seems?—I do not understand you.

Emma. Minna is very beautiful.

Hugel. O! certainly.

Emma. A charming shape.

Hugel.

Hugel. Why, tell me that?

Minna. You find her faultless!

Hugel. You are in jest.

Emma. A man, and especially a lover, cannot be an accurate observer—we females examine more closely.

Hugel. I beseech you to speak plainer.

Emma. Know then, that Minna's apparent levity, arose, from being ashamed to acknowledge to you, what she thought indispensable—that she—strange!—I am almost myself ashamed—(*in haste*) that she is somewhat mis-shaped—at last—it is out.

Hugel. Mis-shaped!—

Minna. On the left side—she fell down stairs from her nurse's arms—drefs can conceal the defect—but to the eyes of her future husband, she wish'd not to appear more engaging than she really is—now you have a key to the enigma.—False shame deterr'd her from telling you herself—for most females would rather avoid a mental defect, than a corporeal failing;—Minna does not belong to this common class—her tongue only denied its service; now, you know all—you know what she has lost in the attraction of her form—and what she acquired in the beauty of her soul:—my friend murmur'd softly in my ear, Emma, I love him!—but that, let him rather hope than know—You see, I have exceeded my powers—the coming moment will evince, whether I must repent my precipitancy.

Hugel. (*transported*) Is this a dream?—Minna!—noblest Minna!—where is she?—where can I find her?

Emma. Dare I inquire with what intention?

Hugel. And can you inquire?—my beloved!—my bride!

Emma. It is as I expected—go—where she is I know not—instinct guides a lover.

Hugel. (*hastens away*) Minna!—Minna!

SCENE VII. EMMA alone.

Emma. Go then—but thou wilt not soon find her—probably, she has crept thro' false shame into some nook or other—there she sits forlorn, and listens—and her heart often throbs high at the idea;—Emma is now speaking to him—(*she sighs*) How is this?—I catch myself at a sigh!—my bosom is not surely norturing
envy

envy, at my friend's happiness!—No, no—but a maiden may be allowed to confess, that to find a deserving, accomplished husband, is truly enviable—Erlach seem'd to go away murmuring and uneasy—he did not relish leaving me alone with Hugel—why so?—girl! girl! do not disclose to any one, what thou now thinkest. (*She retires slowly in a reverie*)

SCENE VIII. MADAME MOREAU appears, very meanly, though cleanly dressed; she supports herself on a walking cane, sometimes stopping, and looking mournfully around; at length she approaches EMMA, unobserved, and contemplates her from head to foot, with mingled emotion and curiosity.

Madame Moreau. Your pardon, Mademoiselle.

Emma. (*starting from her reverie*) Who are you, Madam?—whom may you want?

Moreau. Is this counsellor Flaxland's house?

Emma. Yes.

Moreau. You are perhaps his daughter?

Emma. Would I could answer yes to that question—do you wish to speak to the counsellor?

Moreau. Extremely—if convenient.

Emma. Follow me—I will conduct you to him.

Moreau. Is he alone?

Emma. I believe so.

Moreau. If he be quite disengaged, I wish he would condescend, thro' compassion to an aged woman, who cannot well ascend the steps, to meet me in the garden.

Emma. I will tell him so.

Moreau. Has he any family?

Emma. One son in the army, and a daughter.

Moreau. And you are not this daughter?—that's a pity.

Emma. You are very kind, Madam—whom shall I announce to the Counsellor?

Moreau. A poor old woman—nothing else:—I hope to be in a mansion, where this title will neither shut door nor heart against me.

Emma. I find, you well know the counsellor—he will be instantly here.

[Exit.

SCENE

SCENE IX. MADAME MOREAU *alone*.

Indeed!—ah! good child!—confidence in mankind is a tender plant, so seldom cherish'd by the milk of human kindness; that at length it perishes;—yes—formerly he was benevolent and compassionate, but also young!—youth is tender, but age indurates all—and what dare I hope from a brother, when my only son—hush, hush—speak it not aloud—poor mother!—rather think it was a dream, and be silent—will he not be ashamed of me?—The rich have cousins and aunts in every corner of the world; poverty is only related to misery—it were better to conceal who I am, and first notice his manner and reception—perhaps, I may be more welcome as an object of benevolence, than if I demanded his assistance as an act of duty!—Methinks,—yes,—O God! how my heart beats!—Do not betray thyself!—For if thou must again abandon this house, where wilt thou find a grave?

SCENE X. *Counsellor FLAXLAND and Madame MOREAU.*

Flax. My foster daughter tells me, you wish to speak with me—How can I serve you?

Moreau. I am an Emigrant—had house and home, husband and children—and am now reduced to this staff, but had rather starve, than stoop to beggary;—in my youth, I learnt much for my amusement, but which now, perhaps, in my old age, might procure me my bread—I can sew and wash, cook and bake;—most worthy Sir, do you want an housekeeper?

Flax. I must, with regret, Madam, say no.

Moreau. You have probably some young children, whom I might instruct in English and French?

Flax. I have only a daughter, who is grown up.

Moreau. Oh God!—must I then also leave this mansion without consolation?

Flax. No, madam—that shall not be; I have friends to whom I will recommend you—and meanwhile you may occupy a spare room, and a vacant place at my table.

Moreau. God reward you with an ever cheerful
E heart!—

heart!—My friend spoke truth, when she promised me here a welcome.

Flax. Your friend!—You have perhaps a recommendation to me?

Moreau. I was born at Lyons—and knew there, several years since, an unfortunate German Lady—Philippine Moreau.

Flax. God!—My sister!—Does she yet live?

Moreau. She is dead!

Flax. Dead!—*(tears burst from his eyes—he turns, and leans against a tree, weeping)*

Moreau. *(aside, with uplifted hands)* He yet loves me—there is yet some one in the world who loves me!

Flax. *(looking aghast)* The first intelligence since twenty years!—she is dead!

Moreau. She died in misery.

Flax. Oh! why was she so forgetful of her only brother?

Moreau. She did not forget him, but was silent thro' shame—Can I, said she, intrude myself upon my brother in rags?—will he not reproach me with my weakness?—

Flax. How could she thus misconstrue her William's heart?

Moreau. Shall I revisit my paternal roof—to learn that my good parents bequeathed me their curse as an inheritance?

Flax. Both father and mother blest her on their death bed.

Moreau. Blest her! O! that I could convey this word of comfort into my friend's grave!

Flax. Long, long, have I hoped that she would at length recollect the brother, whom, when a lad, she so heartily loved.

Moreau *(animated)* Yes, yes, that did she! *(composes herself)* she has often assured me of it.

Flax. My hopes of seeing her again grew with these trees—I planted the one, and my sister the other—time has interwoven their branches, but has torn my sister's heart from mine.

Moreau *(greatly affected)* No, no!—

Flax. Our dear mother planted yonder arbour, a year before

before her death—I shall not live, said she, to behold these tender shoots extend their shade, but perhaps thou and thy sister may one day sit under them and remember me.

Moreau. (endeavouring in vain to repress her tears) I can hold no longer!

Flax. (embracing one of the linden trees) I envy our forefathers their delightful superstition—how fondly could I believe my sister's spirit in this tree.

Moreau. (sinks down on her staff) My brother William!

Flax. (hastening to her) God! What is this?

Moreau. (kneeling, her arms outspread) William! my brother!

Flax. (precipitating himself into her arms) Phillippine, art thou her?

Moreau. I am:—do not spurn me!

Flax. I spurn thee—*(a pause)*

Moreau. My good William, lead me under the linden trees, which we planted on our mother's birth day—we then embraced each other, and our parent smiled with fraternal love—let me once more, under their shade, press thee to my heart, and the mother will again look down and smile.

Flax. (conducts his sister to the trees—embraces her tenderly—looks up with tearful eyes, and exclaims) Mother, rejoice with us!—the Almighty has granted thee for us this hallowed moment!

Moreau. (leans her head on his breast) Here, let me die!

Flax. Here shalt thou by my side retrace our youthful endearments—leaning on my arm revisit every tree, whence we used to gather fruit, and yonder daisy bank, where we often reposed—then will I lead thee to the paternal roof, and shew thee the chamber which was called thine—the nut-brown table yet remains, where we learnt to draw, and the closet where thou treasur'd me up bon bons *(he casts his eye on Madame Moreau, who is fainting on his breast)* thou hearest me not! sister, how art thou?—this deadly paleness!—in God's name, help! help!

SCENE XI. EMMA and JOHN enter hastily,
from opposite sides.

John. What is the matter?

Emma. Alas! the poor old woman is taken ill.

Flax. She is my sister!

Emma. Your sister! (*she assists Madame Moreau, who recovers slowly*)

John. How! Mademoiselle Philippine?

Flax. Yes, good old man, thou and I have often wept her loss:—rejoice! we have her again.

Moreau. (*holds out her hand to John*) My good John, art thou still living?

John. Ay! why should I not? and your god-child is also alive.

Emma. Dear Madam, shall I conduct you into the house? you will there be more comfortable.

Moreau. No, dear child:—the fresh air, and the sight that now enlivens me, are the best restoratives.

Flax. If our affection thus revives thee—O! why didst thou not sooner return to our arms?

Moreau. Forgive me, brother: forgive me, my good parents: often when I gathered resolution to surmount my shame, fate threw insurmountable difficulties in my way—I hastened with my husband from hence to his birth-place—Lyons—his parents were exasperated, they had other objects in view for him, and rejected us—we determined to await from the soothing hand of time some favourable change in our destiny, and with the slender pittance of a friend, we embarked for America.

Emma. To America! dare I enquire in what town you settled?

Moreau. In Charles-Town.—

Emma. Gracious God! (*she stands by Madame Moreau, surveying her with the most fixed attention and anxiety, but unperceived by Madame Moreau*)

Moreau. My husband's industry maintained us sparingly—but we loved, and were content—heaven blest our union with two dear babes, a son and a daughter.

Emma. What! a daughter?—

Flax. Where is she?—

Moreau. Ah, William, do not ask: it pleased heaven
to

to punish me for the sorrow I had occasioned my parents—the war, in which America contended for her independence; reduced us to poverty—we returned to Europe eight years since—we found only my husband's mother living—but she soon after died—we enjoyed a momentary repose 'till the terrible revolution destroyed our tranquillity—my husband became a zealous patriot, and fell a sacrifice to avarice and anarchy—my son, misguided young man, emigrated with some young dissipated noblesse—Alas! they have but too well succeeded, in having fashioned him into a vain self-conceited coxcomb, and eradicated every sense of nature and filial duty—I blush to own—he was the first who met me near the city gates.

Flax. This city?—

Moreau. Yes, he is here—I recogniz'd him—not a glimmering of doubt remains to comfort me—with a groupe of riotous companions he rode past me:—my son! I exclaimed, and fell on my knees—he knew my voice—he threw a hasty look at me—I saw the blood rushing to his cheeks—the bridle trembled in his hand.—I heard one of the set enquire, who is that?—I stretch'd out my arms and sigh'd, I am his mother!—alas! he was ashamed of his kneeling parent.—The good woman has lost her senses, said he, and gave his horse the spur.

Flax. Poor sister!—

John. Good God! can't thou suffer such a weed in thy beautiful garden?—

Moreau. I revere the avenging arm of providence—when from afar I perceived my paternal roof, the consciousness of my own undutifulness overcame me, and lo! God sent my son in my way, to exemplify the thankless child;—I do not complain—it is just:—who forsakes father and mother comes to a childless old age.

Flax. But thy daughter!—

Moreau. She died a miserable death!

Emma. (eagerly) She died!—where?—when?—

Moreau. Must I also relate that mournful event?—
The British and Hessians stormed Charles-Town—

Emma. (wild) The Hessians!

Flax. Proceed, dear sister?

Moreau. One dreadful night, the town was fired and plundered—all fled—I clung to my husband, who carried our daughter in his arms—the boy ran by our side—scarce had we reached the door, when my husband fell by a musket shot:—in the same instant, a throng passed thro' the narrow street, and threw me senseless to the ground—after wandering alone for two days in the woods, I found my husband, but my Emma was lost!

Emma. Emma!—in God's name——

Moreau. What means this?—

Flax. (with a faltering voice) Sister, this young lady is also named Emma, and after the storming of Charles-Town, was discovered among the smoking ruins!

Moreau. Brother!——

Flax. Hast thou any mark to recognize thy daughter?

Moreau. None but my heart!

Flax. Her age at that period?—

Moreau. Eight years—

Flax. Her linen mark'd A. M.—

Moreau. (almost fainting) Amelia Moreau!

Flax. It is her!

Emma. (falling on her bosom) My mother!

Moreau. (faints in her brother's arms)

John. (sobs and wipes his eyes.—The curtain drops)

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT

ACT IV.

SCENE I. ERLACH enters in haste—stops in the middle of the stage—appears to be considering—after a minute's deep thought—he raps his cane on the ground, as if he meant 'it shall be so,' and is going off—the Counsellor meets, and stops him.

Flax. Whither? whither?—

Erlach. Away!

Flax. What is amiss?

Erlach. Nothing—

Flax. Thou art a singular being.—

Erlach. Accursed hour when I entered this house.—

Flax. Do'st dream?

Erlach. No, I say no:—it is not my way, nor ever shall be.

Flax. What is it then?

Erlach. Flaxland, hast ever seen a fool?—behold, here stands one!

Flax. Singular being! what maggot has crept into thy head?—we have been seeking thee this hour?—

Erlach. Me! nobody seeks me:—yes, well, if I were somebody—

Flax. At length we espied thee in the meadow—marching with a quick step, backwards and forwards, and skirmishing with your hands.—

Erlach. That is nothing to any body.—

Flax. I was hastening to tell thee—

Erlach. I already know all.—

Flax. Impossible!—the unhop'd discovery—

Erlach. Silence!—I tell thee, I already know all:—the girl is a bride? is she not?—with Herr von Hugel—is it not so?

Flax. Dost already know that?—it has but just now been told me?

Erlach. There we have it!—it is then true?—farewell!—

Flax. My God, whither wilt thou?—

Erlach. Dost think I will be the laughing stock of the bridal feast? hey!—

Flax. My friend, I never saw thee thus.—

Erlach. I am too, for the first time in my life, a fool—but it has been of old my motto, to be nothing by halves.—I am an entire fool.

Flax. How can this connection concern thee?

Erlach. Man, ask me not—torture me not—art thou so dull of comprehension that I must spell it to thee?—why yes, I lately read to thee a chapter on false shame, and thou mayest retort upon me, that I am labouring under the same infirmity—hear then—tho' the syllables be torn by pincers from my tongue—I—miserable wretch—I!—the utterance will choak me—am in love! (*he stops Flaxland's mouth*) and now in God's name, hold thy tongue, hold thy tongue.—

Flax. Thou in love? ha! ha! ha!

Erlach. There we have it—he laughs at me!—

Flax. No, I am truly sorry—had I but known it sooner?—

Erlach. Thou wouldst have overpersuaded the girl—blessings on the wedding feast—she shall never know it—and should a whisper escape thy tongue, thou and I must pull a trigger.—

Flax. Who could ever imagine any thing like this—at thy age the infection is seldom catching—

Erlach. Quite-right!

Flax. One should beware of being enslaved by one's own heart.

Erlach. Proceed—

Flax. Better to pistol one self.—

Erlach. May be—

Flax. Forgive this malicious raillery, and trust me, tho' I esteem Hugel as an excellent young man, I had rather have seen thee in his place.—

Erlach. Baby, pap!

Flax. But now let me tell thee—

Erlach. I will know nothing!—do me the favor to send for post-horses.—

Flax. How! thou wilt in good earnest—

Erlach.

Erlach. Away!—and should'st thou peradventure know of some wilderness unhaunted by woman, tell it me; (*he looks about*) Ah, now we have it—here she comes, with the little head drooping, lovelorn, and sentimentally, and I dare say, she will ask me my blessing.

Flax. Whom?

Erlach. (*without turning, points his hand behind him.*)

Flax. I see nobody but Emma.

Erlach. Why there!—Ah! brother—that the lass could not avoid being eight years older.

Flax. Did'st speak of her?—

Erlach. Of whom else?—

Flax. Herr von Hugel's bride!

Erlach. (*peevishly*) Why that I know too well already.

Flax. Ha! ha! ha!—this is precious—dear Erlach, I leave thee alone with her. [*Exit.*]

Erlach. (*alone*) The fellow is making game of me, so it goes,—we do but fall in love—and, lo! a storm of misery bursts upon us.—He leaves me alone with her; but does it follow, I will speak to her?—no!—I go my ways: farewell Ma'mselle—and should you again be buried up to the chin in foot—may I be damn'd—if—Erlach! Erlach!—one should not for the world be guilty of swearing—she comes nearer—What is that to me?—Should I go—she may conceive I am running away from her.—No, no, Ma'mselle, it is not so dangerous as that neither—We will sit ourselves down in this arbour—may be, she is again on the look out for her somebody.—(*He seats himself, and plays with his cane in the sand*)

SCENE II. EMMA and ERLACH.

Emma. (*enters, without perceiving Erlach, approaches slowly the linden trees—feelingly contemplates them—throws both arms round one tree—kneels, and exclaims, with emotion*) Here, shed I the first tears of joy!—God!—I thank thee!

Erlach. (*to himself, with the chin resting on his cane*) Ay, ay, it was here, where she first found him.

Emma.

Emma. My warmest wishes are fulfilled.

Erlach. Warmest wishes—does that become a maiden?—

Emma. Happy days to come——

Erlach. That is the question!

Emma. To forget—is all I want.

Erlach. And Erlach above every one.

Emma. (*rising*) I must find out the generous Erlach.

Erlach. My turn is come at last.

Emma. How glad he will be.

Erlach. I doubt it.

Emma. (*turning round discovers Erlach*) Ah!—are you there?

Erlach. (*drily, without changing his place*) Here am I.

Emma. (*playfully*) You have been listening to me.

Erlach. It is not my way.

Emma. Do you already know?—

Erlach. O yes!

Emma. Has the Counsellor told you that——

Erlach. Yes, the Counsellor has told me.

Emma. But you do not partake in my happiness?

Erlach. O yes—why not?—I wish you joy.

Emma. So cold!—

Erlach. I cannot dissemble, and to speak plainly, I naturally expected earlier information.

Emma. Earlier!—How was that possible?

Erlach. Why did you send me away?—what pass'd between you, might be easily conceiv'd.

Emma. I cannot comprehend you.

Erlach. The way of the world—Friendship imprints her pretensions on the heart, as I do these letters on the sand;—a breath of love!—and all is obliterated.

Emma. Can my benefactor condemn this love?

Erlach. O! no!—What is it to me?—I have no voice in your election.

Emma. My election!

Erlach. You love him—he is a deserving man—prudent—in good circumstances—

Emma. He! him!—What can this mean?—We misunderstand one another.

Erlach. Not at all—the counsellor informs me the business is settled with Herr von Hugel.

Emma.

Emma. O, yes.

Erlach. Well then?—

Emma. What is that to me?

Erlach. What is it to you?—that is curious.

Emma. I have been brought up with Minna—we love one another as sisters—and so far do I rejoice at her good fortune.

Erlach. Minna!—What has she to do with it?

Emma. Why, she is the bride.

Erlach. Are you making a joke of me?

Emma. Heaven forbid!

Erlach. You convers'd with Herr von Hugel—

Emma. In Minna's name.

Erlach. And gave consent—

Emma. For Minna.

Erlach. Indeed!—in good earnest?—and the fervent gratitude you express'd at this tree—could mere friendship produce such transport?—Blessed then be he who shares your love!

Emma. How come you—to touch that string?

Erlach. Most naturally—by my soul!—I feel myself so surpris'd!—but so much the better,—the soldier, in the heat of battle, forgets the danger.

Emma. Dear captain, you speak in riddles,

Erlach. May be—say but a half word, and I will solve the riddle.

Emma. Your coldness—your reserve—your transport!—it is well we are unobserved.

Erlach. Why?—

Emma. (playful) A third person might have charg'd you with the shame—of being—in love.

Erlach. Shame!—yes, yes,—it is a shame at my years!

Emma. Rather say on your principles.

Erlach. I forbid all ridicule.

Emma. How should I presume—?

Erlach. To be ashamed of abandoning absurd notions—is false shame—in one word, have you not remark'd—?

Emma. What?

Erlach. How;—nothing?

Emma. No!

Erlach. A most unlucky affair has happened to me.

Emma.

Emma. To you!—

Erlach. Do but guess.

Emma. How can I?

Erlach. Try, for it will be harder for me to explain, than you to divine.

Emma. If I were vain——

Erlach. Well?

Emma. I should be apt to suspect——

Erlach. What?——

Emma. You will laugh——

Erlach. By my soul! I am in no laughing mood. —Well, what would you suspect, were you vain?

Emma. That——but pray forgive me.

Erlach. Be quick—I forgive all.

Emma. That you are in love with me?

Erlach. So!—at last it is out.

Emma. I permit you to laugh at me.

Erlach. And I permit thee to be vain—do'st understand me?

Emma. Vain only!—my benefactor's love would make me more proud than vain.

Erlach. And Mr. Benefactor will profit as little by pride as by vanity—no more of this—I do not like it—if thou hast an idea of owing me any thing, let us balance accounts.

Emma. I, poor girl!

Erlach. Ay, ay—who will not pay, pleads poverty—it is beautiful, good, sensible—but poor, poor——

Emma. For what I am and have, thanks to you.

Erlach. Baby-pap!—that is not the question—I see thou wilt not understand me—I am too old, too plain for thee—speak out.

Emma. Why this sounds almost——

Erlach. Like an offer of marriage——why so, now we are at length come to time and place.

Emma. (after a pause) You are marking this day, as the most memorable of my life.

Erlach. So!—how is that meant?—yes or no?

Emma. I esteem you highly.

Erlach. Nothing further.

Emma. A female seldom acknowledges more—had you permitted me to give the word, you would 'ere
now

now have known, that within these few hours, a third person has claimed a share of my heart.

Erlach. Share?—that is not my way.

Emma. And you must now address yourself to my mother.

Erlach. To your mother?

Emma. Your friend's sister, who formerly emigrated with her husband to America—and there in one hapless night, lost house, home, and child.

Erlach. Lost! how?

Emma. The lamented child, whom a gallant soldier rescued from the smoking ruins, is named Amelia Moreau—it is her who delighted in your martial apparel—and since she could think and feel, has adored her noble-minded deliverer. The man who rais'd me from the ashes, acted bravely, but peradventure, many a one in the same predicament, would have saved the weeping child from death, and abandon'd it afterwards to its fate;—but the man, who during eight years, has shar'd with me his slender appointment—O! for him, thanks are a poor return.—Praise and fame may reward heroic deeds, but the noblest actions are not always the most brilliant—a great sacrifice is more easily accomplished in one hour, than a thousand small sweet courtesies, during the space of eight years.

Erlach. (*who, whilst she is speaking with animation, gives various signs of impatience*) Have you done?

Emma. Not yet, Captain Erlach—(*with innate feeling*) not yet, friend—benefactor—brother!

Erlach. Brother!—I understand——

Emma. No, you do not understand me!—If my affections were entangled, I would sighing confess—generous man, pity me, I cannot love you:—but thanks to God, my heart is unfettered—esteem and good will, friendship and gratitude—yes, these sensations are combined into one, and that one is love.

Erlach. My girl!—is that thy earnest?

Emma. With an Erlach, no precipitancy need be fear'd, neither was your proposal utterly unexpected—the nipping coldness with which you left me, when I fought and found Herr von Hugel, intimated to me, what perhaps you scarcely yourself imagined:—my heart throbb'd high at the idea, to recompense my benefactor,

factor, and the life which he preserved, to devote to the happiness of his life :—these flattering ideas excited hopes, wishes—and now dear Captain—without affectation—without false shame :—if a heart, full of innocence—a grateful confidence—and the endeavour to deserve you, can suffice, I shall most willingly become your bride.

Erlach. (seizes overjoyed her hand) Girl! girl! what dost thou make of me?—I could fall on my knees before thee, had I not so often fondled thee on my knee—here then stand I—would fain speak and cannot—and falter before a being, who, eight years ago, was no taller than this rose-bush ;—but one word for all, thou art my wife, my dearest wife !—Why, let them laugh—ha, ha, ha! I too will laugh—see here, see here, and disguise your envy under feign'd smiles—go your way—she is mine!—*Erlach returns to his country, and the alps shall reverberate his shouts—for never was his heart so full of extasy.—(eagerly and playfully he takes her hand under his arm)* Yes, my good girl, we will buy us a farm, an alpine cot, with the friendly sun-beams sporting on our soil, where aromatic roots exhale health, and the wild roses carelessly bloom like thy cheeks—there will we mingle in the song, and dance of a true hearted peasantry.—Huzza! *Erlach and his matchless wife. (he lifts her up, and swings her round)*

Emma. Dear Erlach, my mother approaches—

Erlach. Whom? thy mother :—I had nearly forgotten the romance—and is it then true?—pardon me if I delay enquiring how all this hangs together?—it seems to me as if I were with Emma alone in the world, and had no concern with the rest of mankind.

Emma. Let us beg her blessing!—

Erlach. Ay, ay! *(he throws away hat and cane—takes Emma in his arms, and carries her to meet her mother half way)*

SCENE III. MADAME MOREAU, the former.

Erlach. Your blessing, mother!—

Emma. Dearest mother, this gentleman is my saviour, my benefactor, and if you consent—my husband!

Moreau. Is this the noble-minded man, whom I have to thank for my life's last comfort?

Erlach.

Erlach. Nothing! Nothing!—all is amply repaid—we have just finish'd our account current, and a considerable ballance appears in your favor.

Emma. He courts me for his wife!

Moreau. God! so much joy in one day!—my blessing is with thee, follow the impulse of your heart.

Erlach. (*grasps Emma in his arms*) Come hither! we have the mother's blessing, and if we march hand in hand piously and honestly thro' the world, who will dispute with us God's blessing?

Moreau. Does my brother know?

Erlach. Whence?—a little quarter of an hour since I knew it not myself.—Bravo! Flaxland, my uncle!—in that quality, he may laugh at me with impunity, for the dutiful nephew must not murmur.—Come, dear Emma, let us take courage, and boldly look the laughers out of countenance.

Emma. Why should we be ashamed?

Erlach. I that have been two-and-thirty years a simpleton, and thou to have deem'd it worth while to convert such a simpleton.

SCENE IV. *As he is going off arm in arm with her, they suddenly meet Minna and Hugel also arm in arm—both couple, without separating, front one another.*

Erlach. Who goes there?

Minna. A good friend!

Erlach. The parole.—

Minna. Love and hymen.

Erlach. Bravo!—all are in pairs—that is just my way.

Minna. How Captain?—that did not use to be thy way.

Erlach. Other times—other manners.—

Minna. Matrimony is an old fashion'd custom, and truly you stand there with Emma like a bridegroom.

Erlach. Ay, ay, Lavater forgot the bridegroom's physiognomy—but a female recognizes it at the first glance.

Minna. Emma, Emma, who could believe that the

man whose arm so cordially entwines thee, was only thy guardian ?

Erlach. Away with the guardian—she is my bride !—and now laugh ! shout ! I am arm'd against your raillery.

Minna. Indeed !—why little Cousin thou dost not open thy lips.

Erlach. Why should she ?—she has said yes, and that suffices.

Minna. Often a word too much.—How, dear aunt ?—have you consented ?

Erlach. Why should she not consent ? hey ?

Minna. A woman hater !—

Moreau. So much the more glory for my Emma.

Minna. A rough hewn soldier—

Erlach. Heart of oak is also rough, but the tree spreads its shadow far and wide.

Minna. He is ever scolding and blustering—

Erlach. God beholds the heart.

Minna. Yes, because he can penetrate it—

Erlach. So can Emma : (*with innate sensibility laying her hand on his breast*) is it not so Emma ? thou see'st my heart.—

Emma. Dear Erlach, it beats for me.—

Minna. Ah me ! my poor dear little friend is lost !

Erlach. Let her prate.

Minna. The gallant Captain is a second Cæsar—he comes—sees—and conquers !

Emma. Have I then known him only since this morning ?

Minna. But, he—thee ?—

Erlach. Psha !—when a spark falls into a powder barrel, it blows up in the twinkling of an eye.—

Minna. Psha !—I did not know that men's hearts were powder barrels :—but to what cannot be undone, we must administer the utmost consolation, and as you have proceeded together to such extremes, this solemn salutation (*curtseying*) may intimate—that—no, no—that is not to the purpose :—Come hither, dearest Emma (*kisses and embraces her*) hast thou understood me ?

Hugel. (*gives Erlach his hand*) Captain Erlach, I am most heartily glad—

Erlach.

Erlach. (*shakes his hand*) Why right! an Anglo-German greeting—this language I have learnt from honesty.—Well children, when shall be the wedding day?

Hugel. Methinks to-morrow.—

Erlach. Why not to-day?

Emma. Within the month.—

Minna. In about a year.—

Hugel. Who shall decide?

Minna. Our good aunt.—

Moreau. Have a care child, I always take the part of the weakest.

Minna. That means us girls.

Erlach. By no means.

Hugel. At least not as brides.

Moreau. Ask my brother, and here he comes a propos.

SCENE VI. *The COUNSELLOR, and the former.*

Minna. (*runs to meet him*) Papa, the Western wind has brought an influenza into your garden—every thing pairs itself—every thing will marry.

Flax. So much the better.

Minna. Our platonic—our growler—our woman hater—

Erlach. Pleasant distinctions!—

Minna. For thirty years and upwards he has made his head an ice-cellar, and heaped frozen apothegms the one upon the other, but yon blue eyes have pierced the gloom—and lo! the ice is instantly melted.

Flax. So much the better.—

Erlach. Yes, my worthy uncle—if you have no objection.—

Flax. My dear nephew, thou hast better luck than thou deservest.

Erlach. The Spaniards embark for America, to find gold—I have brought from thence a precious treasure.

Flax. Why so silent, dear sister?

Moreau. I ought to rejoice in the scene before me, but alas! my son! my only son!

Erlach. Your son?—how Emma, hast thou yet a brother?

F

Emma.

Emma. Would to heaven, I could call him brother, without a blush.

Erlach. Where is he? who is he?

Moreau. No more of this! my heart bleeds;—tell it him, when you are alone.

Flax. Right sister—let us not cloud the present chearful hour—I am glad to perceive it undisturbed by the swarm of loungers.

Minna. Mamma feigned a head-ache, and the one vanished after the other.

Flax. Where is thy mother?—nothing here is wanting but her presence.

Minna. She has retired into her closet,

Flax. Retired from us!—what can this mean?

Erlach. My life upon it, nothing bad.

Moreau. She received me with the most heartfelt affection—she appeared overjoyed at my unlooked for appearance:—providence, said she, rewards me beforehand—but dear sister go—within an hour, I can most cordially welcome you—within an hour, I hope to shew myself deserving of this blessing.

Flax. Incomprehensible!—enigmatical!

Erlach. What wilt thou give me to put thee on the scent?

SCENE VI. JOHN, the former.

John. (*sobbing*) Ah! your honour, my good master!—

Flax. What ails thee?

John. I have lived almost half a century in your service.—

Flax. Well?—

John. When a lad, I rooted up the weeds long ere they shewed themselves—to be sure I was then so little, and stupid, that I oft' scraped up the primrose and left the weed.—

Flax. My good old fellow, that happens frequently to children of larger growth—but why weepest thou?

John. Because I am in danger to be myself thrown upon the muck-heap, like garbage:—and, is it not so your honour? tho' no peach tree, I am no nettle in your garden.

Flax. Who molests thee?

John.

John. Hitherto, to be sure, I am excepted—but when one tree after the other is felled, my turn must come at last—Monsieur Rosa, the Friseur—Master Beefstick the Maitre d'Hotel—Signor Maccaroni, the cook—and Herr Wantman, the porter, are all discharged.

Flax. What?

Erlach. Aha!

John. One after the other is called in, receives his half year's wages, and must pack up his bundle—the little conceited French mam'selle is now within, and when she is dispatched, mayhap my turn may come—Remember, Sir, I am an aged tree, that will not bear transplanting:—besides, I have young scyons shooting up, and what is to become of them?

Flax. Be at ease:—thou hast carried me in thy arms—helped me to plunder many a bird's nest, and whilst I live, thy nest shall remain unruffled.

John. A thousand thanks!—neither is it any sparrow's nest from which to protect the cherries with netting.—

Flax. But I cannot comprehend—

Erlach. Thou wilt soon comprehend—yonder comes thy incomparable wife—away! away! let's leave a clear stage; for a matrimonial scene approaches, which must not be performed before spectators:—come, let us see if the musicians have already had leave of absence? we must suspend the furlough, for I will dance to-day, tho' I were myself to grumble the tune. *(he offers Madame Moreau his arm, the others follow)*

John. My old woman sits forlorn on the bleech and moistens the linen with her tears—I must home—must tell her: do not cry old one, so long as we live, we shall grow our vegetables in this garden. *[Exit.]*

(The Counsellor remains in a profound reverie and scarcely perceives he is left alone.)

SCENE VIII.

Mrs. Flax. *(in a neat plain morning dress—she silently approaches the Counsellor, and lays her hand gently on his shoulder)* So deep in thought!

Flax. Ah! my love, I was thinking of thee.

Mrs. Flax. And yet look so gloomy.—

F 2

Flax.

Flax. Thy countenance disperses every wrinkle—except those which are impressed by age.

Mrs. Flax. Domestic happiness, gives even to old age an unwrinkled forehead.

Flax. Then I should resemble a young man.—

Mrs. Flax. I appeal to thy heart—thou deceivest me.

Flax. How? dost thou discredit my love?

Mrs. Flax. No :—but something more than love is required to constitute a happy union.

Flax. More than love?—

Mrs. Flax. Love adorns the spring of life, and marriage it's summer :—but they who in dalliance neglect to sow the seeds of confidence, how can they expect in autumn to gather the fruit of domestic bliss.

Flax. (*smiling*) Wherefore this poetic effusion?—

Mrs. Flax. Poetry! well then—poetry is the attendant of truth, and must assist in decorating her mistress.

Flax. From thy mouth I prefer truth unadorned.

Mrs. Flax. Very gallant.—As thou art in the vein to compliment me, allow me to ask, how you like me now?

Flax. Thou art so simply, so neatly drest, thou lookest most lovely.

Mrs. Flax. Handsomer than usual?

Flax. Much handsomer in my eyes.

Mrs. Flax. Why then art thou incessantly lavishing upon me silks and taffeta?—why dost thou constrain me to follow every whim of fashion?

Flax. Thy round of visits is numerous.

Mrs. Flax. But why must I keep up this round of visits?

Flax. To add to thy amusements.

Mrs. Flax. Who makes thee believe, that I find elsewhere more amusement than in thy company :—this simple deshabille—O! I well know it becomes me better than a gala suit—this is wholly for thee my dear—modest, unassuming, (*smiling*) the dust of jealousy will not cling to these folds.

Flax. Jealousy!—I hope thou dost not think me tainted.

Mrs. Flax. Why not? if thou lovest me.

Flax.

Flax. But my confidence.—

Mrs. Flax. Why even there it sticks:—Oh! my good man, thou dissemblest before me a confidence, and tormentest thyself in private with frightful chimeras—was I not then justified in asserting, that love alone did not suffice to make the marriage state happy.

Flax. (*confused*) Thou wrongest me.

Mrs. Flax. No, no, I know all, and spare thee the confession—a painful wound must be healed, without too much use of the probe, or the knife—suffer me only to add, it is thyself who was ever engaging me in the great world—it is thyself, who kept open house for coxcombs and parasites—who feared thy young wife would be vapoured in thy house—That was false discretion—Whilst complying with thy desire abroad, evil dreams haunted thee at home—but thou wast ashamed of them, and that was false shame:—Man and wife should not even conceal their dreams from one another—a look would have been enough—I might perhaps have indulged a little laugh against thee—but should most cheerfully have offered a worthless sacrifice to thy peace of mind.—Oh! how many a marriage union is destroyed, because the band of confidence was not tied heart to heart.—How oft' the torch of discord becomes unextinguishable, because husband or wife smothered the first spark.

Flax. Angelic woman!—forgive me!

Mrs. Flax. I forgive thee, but upon one condition—that thou wilt be pleased, henceforward, not to move a step without me:—when thou writest, I will sit by thee with my work-bag—and when thou hast finished, we will continue together.

Flax. Instead of punishing, thou art rewarding me, my love.

Mrs. Flax. O!—I have now thought of a punishment:—thou preferrest the town, but I think the country most engaging—only once, within three years, have we visited our farm—that is unnatural—and as a penance, thou must linger there with me the whole summer.

Flax. Caroline!—this is too much.

Mrs. Flax. I cannot spare thee—and thou must moreover be satisfied with household fare, for I have discharged our privileg'd poison-mongers.

Flax.

Flax. Thou hast, I understand, made several economical retrenchments.

Mrs. Flax. A complete revolution.

Flax. Thou wilt thereby diminish thy pleasures.

Mrs. Flax. And thereby acquire my heart's content;—man! man! must I also learn thro' a friend, that the luxuries thou wast daily recommending—the superfluity, in which thou madest me indulge, were purchased at the expence of thy peace of mind—that I was wronging thy children, to reward by the robbery, every specie of ennui.

Flax. Why surely Erlach—

Mrs. Flax. Thank God, for sending him to my salvation—without him, I should have been hurried to perdition, and awoke too late!—Thou wicked man!—that again was thy fault, the want of confidence;—in thy opinion, women were incapable of estimating the value of a worthy man, unless his hands were ever loaded with presents, like the subjects of an Eastern Potentate. Learn to know us better—a wife is prouder in an estimable husband, than in a pair of diamond earrings—and prefers going unnoticed on foot, possessing her husband's affection, than without it, attracting the eyes of a gaping croud, in a dazzling phaeton.

Flax. (*falls at her feet*) Caroline!—

Mrs. Flax. (*smiling*) Dear Flaxland, I must for the first time remind thee, that thou art turn'd of forty—kneeling does not become thee.

Flax. I have indeed misjudged thee!—pardon me.

Mrs. Flax. (*raises him and embraces him*) It is past—we will retire into the country, shall we not?—and in a few years, my dissipation will be recovered—Oh! how many an establishment falls to ruin, because the husband is ashamed to disclose to his wife, the true state of his circumstances—my experience this day, has so innately convinced me of this melancholy truth, that were I now standing before a numerous assembly, I should extend my arms, and glowing with philanthropy, should address each father of a family—Trust thy wife—thou totterest perchance on the brink of an abyss—confidence may save thee—banish false shame, this monster of vanity and arrogance!—trust thy wife, thy truest friend! and thou wilt be rewarded with consolation

tion for the past—with advice and assistance for the future.

Flax. Wife!—what a spirit gives utterance through thee!

Mrs. Flax. I should be a low-minded wife, if love and duty could not inspire me.

Flax. I ought to be ashamed, that a woman of five and twenty, should instruct a man of my mature years:—but this were again false shame, which shall be for ever banished from my bosom:—from this moment, thou, like God, shalt behold my heart's inmost thoughts—even those, that shun the light of day, will I whisper in thy ear—and whenever a weakness would lurk concealed, the remembrance of this hour, shall draw it forth, for thy good-natur'd merriment and forgiveness.

Mrs. Flax. O! God! I thank thee!—it is accomplish'd—my husband is once more mine.

Flax. Thine for ever!—but dearest Caroline, do not imagine, that thro' deranged circumstances thou art compelled to bury thy youth in the country—my property is yet ample.

Mrs. Flax. Bury!—the enjoyment of nature and one's self, men call burying—well then, the nightingales shall chaunt our requiem.

Flax. My dear Caroline, thou art not familiariz'd with solitude.

Mrs. Flax. Thro' conjugal affection, the wife adopts another mode of life, with the same facility she changes a fashion;—a few years since, I fancied only a large hat cou'd become me, and the hats were never large enough to my mind—I now think this fashion frightful, and am only pleased with myself in the smallest hat.—Thus will it be in this case—four weeks in the country, and a city life will appear like a large hat—and I never shall be able to comprehend how I could endure myself in it.

Flax. So be it then, if this is thy desire.

Mrs. Flax. Here hast thou my hand.

Flax. I embrace it with extasy!

Mrs. Flax. Domestic retirement shall be our delight.

Flax. And peace, in the bosom of my beloved!

Mrs. Flax. In the arms of affection—

Flax. Season'd by friendship—

Mrs. Flax.

Mrs. Flax. Embellish'd by nature——

Flax. Nearly lost, thro' false shame——

Mrs. Flax. Thro' confidence restored——

Flax. (*folds her in his arms*) And never more to be abandoned——

Mrs. Flax. Never! never!

SCENE IX. ERLACH and the former.

Erlach. (*indignant*) Scoundrel!—whoever breaks his neck, shall be amply rewarded.

Flax. What aileth thee, brother?

Erlach. Scarce could I refrain from flourishing my rattan about his ears.

Flax. Of whom art thou speaking?

Erlach. Of the most accomplish'd Viscount de Mail-lac, my rascally brother-in-law.

Flax. (*astonished*) Thy brother-in-law!

Erlach. The wretch has the honor to be Emma's brother, and is ashamed of his poor mother:—just now, with his usual impertinence, he skipp'd thro' the garden gate, when Madame Moreau perceiv'd him, she cried aloud—my son!—it was a voice, that might have melted flint—the puppy started, and seem'd alarmed—but impudence would not leave him in the lurch—he snuffled—the lady is mistaken—we shudder'd. and explained to him, every one in his way, how the matter stood—Emma called him brother, and I a swindler—mean while, the agitated mother with uplifted hands, seem'd anxiously expecting a filial token, to fly into his arms;—it was truly ever my wish, muttered the wretch, to be allied to the Flaxland family, but if this be the only alternative——And so he shrugg'd his shoulders, folded himself like a snake, and darted out of the gate:—I called after him, fellow—Among all the species of false shame, the most atrocious is, to be ashamed of one's poor parents, because one wants the resolution, to brave the miserable raillery of a few courtly mendicants.

Flax. My poor sister!—where is she?

Erlach. The girls are endeavouring to dry her tears—here she comes—behold, how quickly a mother's affliction bleaches the cheeks!

SCENE

SCENE X. MADAME MOREAU, HUGEL, MINNA,

EMMA, and the former.

Flax. (meeting her) My good sister!

Moreau. I beseech thee brother, do not mention him—let no one name him more:—you could not but condemn him—and his mother could not attempt his defence—it is far gone indeed, when maternal affection must be silent!—ah! had he died in the cradle! I might have exclaimed, death has robb'd me of a lovely boy!

Emma. (caressing her) You have yet two children.

Moreau. The lost child is always the most lamented.

Flax. We must not expect cloudless days!

Moreau. Forgive me, I will not murmur—God has been to-day so indulgent to me!—Ah! what was I, but a few hours past?—come to my arms, my dearest children!—*(she embraces Erlach and Emma, and drops her head on her daughter's bosom)*

Erlach. I pledge you my hand, mother—I will re-instate you the boy.

Mrs. Flax. What is it I see?—our woman-hater converted.

Minna. These sudden convertites are not always the most secure.

Erlach. Miss Wisdom, learn from me—that from all proverbs and sayings, love is ever excepted.

Minna. But after having so often vowed eternal hatred to the sex.

Hugel. To the sex, but not to angels.

Erlach. Well said, my good coz.

Minna. (to Hugel) Sweet Sir, it is written, you must have only eyes for me:—if this applies to the green bridal sapling, what must not one expect from the mature season'd wedding tree?—Take my father as an example—he is no longer a youngster—has been three years married, and behold how his eyes dwell enamoured on my mother!

Flax. Emulate her example—she has to-day made me the happiest of men!—Rejoice Erlach, we remove into the country.

Erlach. Amen.

Mrs. Flax. Thank him, my dear Flaxland.

Erlach. Hush!—do not betray me.

G

Flax.

Flax. A friend thanks not with words.

Erlach. Cheerly my hearts!—here is a happy group—an angel would not blush to descend among us—your ears have been regaled this morning with many a ditty—now, to please me, you must all join in the song—strike up musicians—joy!—planet of paradise!—Elysium's child!

The Music behind the scenes, plays Schiller's Ode to Joy, Flaxland takes his Wife under the right, and his Sister under the left arm, joined on one side by Erlach and Emma, and on the other, by Minna and Hugel.—Thus encircled, they sing:

Ye, who in life's lottery blest,
Where friendship, kindred souls unites;
Ye, of endearing wives possest,
Hymen, to this feast invites!

The Curtain drops, and the sounds die gradually away.



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